Enhancing Literary Comprehension And Technology Engagement Via Digital Storytelling During A Pandemic Lockdown – A Qualitative Study on Malaysian Undergraduates

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Abstract

Learning of Literature is said to be challenging. This is perhaps due to the richness and complexities of the literary texts used in classrooms. When the world was hit by Covid-19 pandemic, alternative assessment and learning activities which are to be done online need to be implemented to replace conventional ones. The education landscape transformed immediately with the use of technology to minimise the disruption impact to teaching and learning caused by the pandemic. To engage learners in learning a literary text and enhance their literary comprehension, digital storytelling was opted for its value as an innovative pedagogical approach that may strengthen students' learning. The purpose of this study was to explore the manner Digital storytelling (DST) can benefit on learners' literary comprehension and technology engagement during a pandemic lockdown. The study adopted a qualitative approach by conducting an online semi-structured interview to 10 selected Malaysian undergraduates. The findings of the interview were tabulated and analysed thematically. Findings from the interviews indicated that the experience of preparing a digital story was a worthwhile yet challenging experience, however, it has greatly improved their literary comprehension on the issues depicted in the chosen literary play. In addition, learners also found that through the creation of a digital story, it also has expanded and enriched their technological skills through active and meaningful engagement in utilising the necessary video editing software. These indicated that digital storytelling is an effective tool in increasing learners' literary comprehension through engagement of technology which nowadays has become imperative during this pandemic era.

Keywords: Alternative Assessment, Digital Storytelling, Language and Literature, Literary Comprehension, Technology Engagement.

Introduction

Covid-19 pandemic has caused devastating impact globally. The world was shaken and unprepared to handle this invisible and deadly enemy. To control the spread of the virus, most countries took an unprecedented measure of enforcing a lockdown or movement control

order. Economy and education sectors had to be shut down. Students all over the world had to stay home and continue their study online. This condition revealed one of the drawbacks of online learning, a significant digital gap can be seen amongst learners especially learners in higher education institutions. Online learning via various online platforms cannot be executed if learners are not equipped with fast internet connection and smart devices like laptops and handphones. However, despite this challenge, the pandemic also has become the catalyst in transforming the education landscape. Previously online learning is perceived to only complement traditional learning, but in today's context, it is the *only* mode of learning to be applied. Online learning has become part of the new normal which both instructors and learners need to quickly adapt. During online learning, teacher-centred approach is no longer suitable as instructors evolve as "learning facilitator" (Grant & Gedeon, 2020, p. 26). As the process of teaching and learning is done remotely during the crisis of Covid-19 pandemic, the education community solely relies on technology as the imperative tool to ensure continuous learning. To add, with online learning learners are promoted to be creative as they actively discover and construct new knowledge whilst developing an understanding on the subject content through their interaction with various multimedia resources (Banasiewicz, 2020).

Learning of literary plays can be both appealing and challenging experience for learners. Due to lack of descriptive and narrative descriptions in the play as compared to novels and short stories, learners may find it difficult to visualize the plot of the play. The experience gets even more difficult when the learners are only learning using online mode during the lockdown where the instructors are not present to give direct and instant guidance, elaboration and immediate feedback when needed. Regardless of these challenges, learning of plays or drama has its own merits. Maley & Duff (2005) assert that through plays, learners draw upon both cognitive and affective domains, thus "restoring the importance of feeling as well as thinking" (p. 1). As learners are progressively engaged with the play, it helps learners to get in touch with their "multi-sensory" and "self-awareness". Plays also help to increase learners' motivation for they are exposed to an "open and exploratory style of learning" which taps into their creativity and imagination (Maley & Duff, 2005, p. 1-2). Through drama, communicative competence of learners can be honed by engaging them with motivating task designs and collaborative learning which allow them to express their ideas more openly (Musthafa, 2015).

Digital storytelling (DST) is an artistic and creative product unlike traditional forms of storytelling, in that it "combines the art of telling stories" with a mixture of digital media, including text, pictures, recorded audio narration, music and video (Sawyer & Willis, 2011; Hardy & Summer, 2014; Robin, 2016, p. 18; Irwin, 2019). With the rapid and *rampant* technological development such as smart phones, this relatively small smart devices are equipped with advanced camera features and video editing applications or software that enable learners to create their version of digital stories quite effortlessly. 21st century learners are known to be digital natives who have been exposed to the how-to and concepts of content recording and editing which are crucial skills in digital storytelling (Irwin, 2009). DST is critically acclaimed to be an approach that could enhance learning by improving "content acquisition, critical thinking skills and information literacy" (Yang & Wu, 2012). It is also argued as an effective tool that may improve information gathering skills, problem solving and attitudes towards collaborative learning (Cetin, 2021). Furthermore, as technology becoming more advanced and relatively low-cost in addition with "user-friendly multimedia editing software" digital storytelling has become a formidable tool that can "communicate concepts, emotions,

and feelings through textual, visual, and auditory modes" (Kim, et. al, 2020). Prior to creating a digital story, instructors need to provide learners with a stimulus which reflects the course content and its learning outcomes. Apart from improving critical thinking skills, DST also empowers learners in expressing themselves while being connected to subject content. During the process of producing a digital story, learners "meticulously select and edit artifacts, from personal products to other multimedia resources that meaningfully support the story and learning goals, thereby developing technology and media skills" (Yang & Wu, 2012, p. 340).

Literature Review

Digital Storytelling (DST)- An Overview

DST is an increasingly popular pedagogical tool to be used in any classrooms. DST is a creative process which assimilates the "ancient art of oral storytelling" with technology in which stories are weaved and presented digitally by using graphics, music and the author's authentic voice and thoughts (Porter, 2005; Ohler, 2008). The creative process of DST is divided into five steps: planning, writing a script, preparing a storyboard, collecting relevant materials, production and evaluation (Ohler, 2013). As storytelling is ingrained to be part of our culture, learning is made accessible when we could remember information in a storytelling format. DST interactive features can "stimulate the imagination, creative thinking, language learning" and initiate cooperative learning processes (Willingham, 2004). Learners, regardless of backgrounds and ethnicities would find DST as relevant and very close to their culture. Apart from that, it may also serve as a reflective tool for learners to express their thoughts and voices (Freidus & Hlubinka, 2002; Burgess, 2006; Couldry, 2008; Garcia & Rossitter, 2010). DST is categorised into three types; personal narratives, historical documentaries, and stories to inform or instruct (Robin, 2006). Through these different types, each facilitates the "convergence of four student-centered learning strategies" as it enables student engagement, reflection for deeper learning, project-based learning and effective integration of technology into instruction (Barret, 2005; Wang & Zhan, 2010). In the figure below, Robin (2008) illustrated how DST is converged in the field of education. With this convergence, learners are to be digitally literate as they demonstrate their ability in identifying, accessing, managing, integrating, evaluating, analysing and synthesizing digital resources (Martin, 2008).

Fig 1: The convergence of digital storytelling in education
(Source: Robin (2008))

Apart from enhancing digital literacy skills through digital storytelling, DST also carries multiple merits which benefit learners. As more instructors or educators acknowledging the values of DST as a tool to promote "creativity and problem solving while encouraging self-direction and personal initiative" (McLellan, 2006, p. 68), DST is now perceived to be one of the outcomes of digital literacy. DST is claimed to be an effective approach to engage learners into meaningful and collaborative learning. Since DST is using the "language of their generation" (Hofer & Swan, 2006), learners will be more motivated, and their interest can be sustained while acquiring new knowledge. This heightened sense of motivation can be detected during the process of producing a DST through the process of brainstorming an outline, preparing a script and a storyboard while addressing the task as instructed (Hung et al., 2012; Smeda et al., 2012). DST also offers a platform for "reflective deep learning" when learners are making the connection between their prior knowledge with the new learning experience, simultaneously this process also could help learners to acquire new knowledge (Weigel, 2002).

Many studies have been carried out pertaining to the effectiveness of DST in enriching and enhancing learning experiences. Sadik (2008) in his mixed-method study indicated that despite experiencing some hiccups along the way, the implementation of DST using MS Photo Story has successfully increase learners' understanding of the course content, whilst the instructors acknowledge the values of DST, thus they are willing to transform their teaching pedagogy by integrating DST into their classrooms. Similar success can also be found in Yang & Wu (2012) study. By conducting a quasi-experimental design, they discovered how DST improves academic achievement, critical thinking and learners' motivation. DST as an integrated instructional material managed to establish a conducive learning environment by encouraging collaborative learning as well as facilitating the emergence of unique and individual digital products. Stanley & Ouyang (2014) in their study on the impact of filmmaking project amongst undergraduates discovered that the digital storytelling projects produced by the research participants have proved that DST is not only an efficient tool to integrate technology, it also helps to empower learners with new knowledge. Thang et al., (2014) conducted a study on both teachers and learners by examining their perspectives and experiences in utilizing DST in the subject of English for Academic Purposes. The study revealed that DST has aided in promoting 21st century skills such as interactive communication

skills, interpersonal skills, technology literacy skills as well as language skills. Lazar et al., (2020) has investigated on the overall understanding of pre-service teachers' acceptance of the Digital Storytelling tool based on Technological Acceptance Model. The study indicated that new generations of pre-service teachers are comfortable and well-versed in using technology in comparison to other generations whom in need of other educational resources apart from instructional technology to support their capabilities and motivation for learning. Kocaman-Karogl (2014) also chosen pre-service teachers as his sampling in a study which examined the use of DST in a university course. Through mixed-method research instruments, he found that the use of DST appeals to learner's emotional interaction whilst delivering accounts of their personal experiences. Yuksel-Arslan et al., (2016) investigated on teachers of childhood education and the manner they integrated DST into their classrooms as well as documenting the challenges and success stories. The study has proven that DST is able to enhance learning and it is a valuable tool to be applied in young children's learning environments.

Theoretical Perspectives
This study is framed based on several frameworks, first, by deriving from model of Digital Age Literacy, Digital storytelling is one of the many pedagogical tools which entrusts learners with technology that stimulates their research skills and creativity. 21st century is the era of Digital Age Literacy which requires learners to equip themselves with 21st century skills; digital literacy, global literacy, technology literacy and visual literacy (Robin, 2008). All these four skills help to create learners who are sophisticated in expressing their ideas through the use of technology, to be able to relate to global society by responding and contextualising global perspectives, to use technology as a tool to improve productivity and learning abilities and to be able to understand and synthesize information visually. These skills are also transparent in Malaysia Quality Framework 2.0 which emphasises on five clusters of learning outcomes, in which one of it is to inculcate Functional Skills amongst undergraduates. One of these functional skills is Digital Skills that refer to the "ability to use information/digital technologies to support work and studies." Learners are expected to learn how to source and store information, process data, solve problem and communicate and be ethical when applying digital skills. At Undergraduate level, learners are expected to "use a broad range of information, media and technology applications to support study and/or work" (Malaysia Quality Framework, 2019). Additionally, this study is also framed by framework derived from The Community of Inquiry (COI) Model of Online Learning which places emphasis on "social presence, teaching presence, and cognitive presence as essential elements to facilitate successful educational experiences in online distance learning environments" (Bektashi, 2018). COI model of online learning is established from constructivist approaches in which, in an online learning environment, students are given the autonomy to actively construct and confirm meaning (Garrison et al., 1999; Bektashi, 2018). It is ascertained that meaningful learning occurs when the task design gives focus onto the learners and they are learning by making mistakes and self-inquiry. Meanings are formed and new knowledge is created when learners can make the connection between the new content and their existing knowledge. Advances in technology have provided tools that support students, as they explore and inquire. To support a student-led education, the role of the educator needs to be reimagined; instead of recording information, learners interpret new knowledge by relating it to existing concepts (Patterson, 2018).

Problem Statement

In traditional classrooms, learners are commonly seen to be sitting passively most of the time whilst trying to grasp the lecture notes presented by the instructor perhaps through Power Point slides. However, in a literature class, they are expected to be actively engaged not only during discussions but also to have personal connection with the text. By participating in active discussion and be in tuned with the text, this empower learners to be more autonomous by constructing meanings and be responsible towards their learning as they interact with their "social and technological environment" (Fosnott, 1996; Prawat 1996; Yang &Wu 2012). However, during this pandemic, both learners and instructors are *entrapped* in their homes during the lockdown, thus, making learning of literature to be even more challenging. Even with continuous support from the instructor throughout the course, most learners feel that it is still challenging to grasp the themes and issues presented in the play. Deriving from a constructivist approach, technology seems to be the solution. In order to draw learners' attention and stimulate their interest, Robin (2008) proposed for DST to be adopted in a classroom to help learners to grasp new knowledge as well as presenting and organising their findings in a more simplified but appealing manner.

In a literature class, part of its learning outcomes is for learners to share their voices and express their thoughts. This is almost impossible to achieve when learners were engaged remotely with many external factors that could distract them from giving their utmost attention in class. To ensure the voices of the learners were heard, DST was incorporated into the lesson so that learners may feel autonomous enough to share their viewpoints in a meaningful manner (Lambert 2003). According to Hughes (2005), technological pedagogy can be classified into three categories: replacement, amplification or transformation. DST is a form of knowledge amplification in which integration of technology is utilized to achieve the objectives of a learning task (Pea, 1985; Yang & Wu, 2012). By integrating technology in a literature class, active engagement with technological devices provides learners with the opportunity to "create new knowledge, solve problems and employ creativity and critical thinking" (Griest 1996; Hoffman 1997; Mergendollar 1997; Richards, 1998) as they are regarded to be "constructive agents" (Spivey, 1997) even though they are physically distanced from a traditional classroom.

Therefore, this study intents to achieve the following objectives:

a. To investigate how digital storytelling helps to improve the learners' comprehension of a literary text.
b. To examine the learners' views regarding the integration of digital storytelling in a literature class.

Methodology

Research Design

As part of the course syllabus, the learners were required to study a play, *Swordfish and The Concubine* written by a Malaysian playwright, Kee Thuan Chye. The play is loosely based on two tales from *Sejarah Melayu*, *Hikayat Singapura dilanggar Todak* and *Hikayat Demang Lebar Daun.* The play takes its audience into the ancient world of the Malay monarchy. The play revolves on delicate matter such as the relationship between *rakyat* (people) and his *Sultan* (King) which further reveal issues like manipulation of history, power abuse, sacrifice, treason and deconstruction of the Malay Monarchy. Even though, the context

of the play depicted the era of pre-Melaka empire, armed with creativity license, the playwright has written the play with a contemporary twist in which he has incorporated elements like hip hop and rap music into the staging of the play. Despite the intense issues or themes presented in the play, the contemporary elements have made the play not only entertaining and appealing but also thought-provoking to the young undergraduates. The learners were to read and analyse the play individually. The instructor engaged the learners in several language and literary activities to help them to make sense of the play and facilitate their comprehension. Lessons were conducted both synchronously and asynchronous. As their final assessment, the learners were introduced to the concept of Digital storytelling and they were required to create a DST based on an issue or a theme depicted in the play. They were required to illustrate their chosen theme as portrayed in the play by acting out the scenes which highlighted this theme. At the end of their DST, the learners were to comment on how the issues featured in the play are still prevalent today. The duration of their DST is set within 5-7 minutes and they were given the freedom to innovate their DST by incorporating various forms of multimedia according to their creativity. The video of their DST was uploaded on their personal YouTube channels to be shared with the rest of the class. Fig. 2 shows the process the learners had to go through in developing their personalised digital stories based on the literary play *Swordfish and The Concubine*,
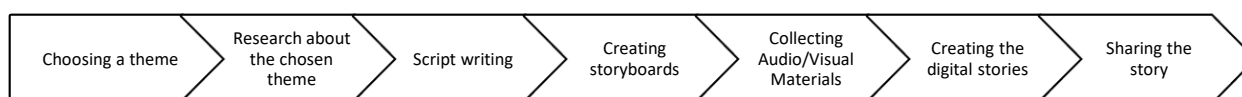
| Choosing a theme | Research about the chosen theme | Script writing | Creating storyboards | Collecting Audio/Visual Materials | Creating the digital stories | Sharing the story |

Fig. 2: The process of digital stories creation
(Adapted from: Cetin (2021))

Participants
The informants consist of First Year undergraduate students of Languages and Cross-cultural communication programme from Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia. They are to take the subject Language and Literature in their second semester. When the Movement Control Order (MCO) was enforced, they were only four weeks into the semester, thus they had to continue the rest of the semester via online. Ten informants from twenty-nine students were selected using purposive sampling. All ten informants were equipped with more than one smart devices, stable internet connectivity and adept in using video editing software or apps. A semi-structured online interview session with five questions was conducted over Microsoft Teams with 10 informants. The informants were asked to elaborate on the following questions:

a.   How would you describe your experience in creating your own digital storytelling?
b.   What did you learn from creating your own digital stories?
c.   What are the pros and cons of digital storytelling?
d.   Does the experience of creating your own digital stories help improve your digital skills?
e.   Does the experience of creating your own digital stories help improve your critical thinking in comprehending the literary play?

Findings

The recordings of the interview were reviewed and the interview was transcribed verbatim. The findings from the interview were processed and analysed in stages. The verbatim transcriptions of the interview were familiarised and reviewed multiple times to ensure its accuracy. After the data has been familiarised, the process of coding followed. Coding involves the process of examining and tagging the content of the data by labelling a word, a paragraph, a page and provide a suitable label which summarised its content and meaning (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Similar views or opinions were gathered under the same code and these different codes were gathered under different themes (Stringer, 2007). Codes can be grouped together and be defined into different emerging themes. Table 1 displays the themes, sub-themes and codes that emerged from the interview:

Table 1: Learners' responses on the experience of creating digital stories

Theme and Codes	Number of codes
Enjoyable learning experience	3
Time constraining	2
Nervous experience due to lack of experience in using technology	4
Improves understanding on the themes emerged from the play	3
Improves creativity in developing a digital story	2
Develops video editing skills	1
Develops empathy for the characters in the play	2
New learning experience	3
Improve storytelling skill	2

Discussion

From the interview conducted with the informants, the following results were tabulated.

Research Question 1: How does digital storytelling help to improve the learners' comprehension of a literary text?

Based on the interview conducted, most of the participants believed that digital storytelling was a worthwhile but challenging experience, however, it has helped them to empathised with the characters featured in the play. The informants understood more on the psyche of each character and able to identify with the actions committed by them. They became more motivated and interested to represent their understanding through technology. To develop their digital story on the representation of themes of the play, many of the informants said that they need to "think outside the box" prior in creating the content for their DST. The following were some of their feedback:

"…creating my own digital story was tough in the beginning but after some time, I enjoyed doing it and I love it! Somehow it has helped me to understand more about the story."

"…I try to put myself in the story do it will make it easier for me to explain."

"…I put more effort on understanding the characters' minds like I put myself in their shoes."

"…I brainstorm any events that are related to the theme that I chose, and I understand the story better and discover more themes and issues in the play."

"…it helps me to interpret the play critically, thus improves my understanding of the play."

Their responses are consistent with Jonassesen (2000) who asserted that for a successful learning to occur, learners need to be engaged and motivated and this may be achieved by allowing them to explore the available technology as an aid to their learning. Being a digital natives themselves, learners are familiar with the use of technology and by providing them with a literary text that was relatable and relevant to their personal experiences, they were able to produce a DST that was meaningful and authentic. Shank (1990) maintained that literary texts are useful sources in connecting learners' background knowledge and it may improve memory, thus DST helps learners to recollect information and further making them understand the content and issues that are being delivered by the text (Gimeno-Sanz, 2015). Drama is interesting and motivating and it promotes its readers to explore the story by physically acting it out. Regardless whether stories are told verbally or digitally, learners get to experiment with the drama through their facial expressions, vocal articulation, enunciation, display of emotion and gestures (Mokhtar et.al.,2010). Similar view is concurred by Razmi et.al., (2014) by which apart from improving learners' understanding on a literary text, DST also becomes the catalyst in transforming learners in becoming "creative storytellers" (p. 1542) as they carefully went through creative processes starting from topic selection, conducting research, script writing and creating a storyboard prior producing their DST. Part of the objectives of DST integration in a literature classroom is to allow learners to "experience the power of personal expression" through technology within specific learning outcomes constructed by the instructor (Bull & Kajder, 2004). Harryzman & Norshuhada (2009) explained that during the process of constructing digital stories, learners are trained to enhance their communication skills during the process of bridging their comprehension of the literary text to a digital content.

Digital storytelling minimises learners' anxiety and help to break down communication barriers as they share their interpretation of the themes depicted in the play through screen, rather than face-to-face interaction. Furthermore, these responses are also parallel pertaining to DST and its relation to constructivism theory. Najat et.al., (2014) explained that in constructivism approach, learners are encouraged to deliver their "interpretation of the world" (p. 6) and reflect their understanding by connecting different sources of knowledge. It is evident that this is achieved through the learners' production of DST. Each of their DST reflected the meticulous cognitive processes, from digesting the literary text to critically assessing the themes or issues illustrated in it, thus they have successfully indicated their comprehension of the play holistically. A literary text is not necessarily to be presented in a linear form, thus it invites learners to corroborate between their knowledge and the text to construct meaning through interpretation of content (Garcia & Rossiter, 2010), though it may be perceived to be a challenging cognitive process, however when achieved, it gives a heightened sense of satisfaction within the learners.

Research Question 2: What are the learners' views regarding the integration of digital storytelling in a literature class.

In response to the second research question, all informants found the opportunity and experience of utilizing technology in aiding their learning process was a worthwhile and meaningful experience. They found themselves tapping into their creativity and they were motivated to search for other sources to inspire them to create their original DST. Some of the informants stated that;

"…digital storytelling is a very interesting assignment in comparison to a writing assignment because I can create an interesting video according to my creativity and preference. Writing a video script is easier than producing a whole essay."

"…it was an exciting experience and the way I present my digital storytelling is a reflection of my enjoyment towards the subject."

"…I had a lot of fun since I love creating new things. This (*digital storytelling assignment*) gave me an opportunity to do something new."

"…I learnt a lot on how to make a good story by using tools like clipart and video editing software which I never use before."

These findings indicated that DST is a meaningful pedagogical tool that allows learners to learn "by doing" (Gimeno-Sanz, 2015, p. 110). As mentioned by Lana; "I was enjoying it! Initially I thought it was going to be hard, but it turned out to be fun as I get to pick and edit scenes from movies and turned it into a story". Her positive response regarding the integration of digital storytelling in the classroom has clearly indicated that the learners have benefited greatly from the process of producing their personalized digital stories (Kearney, 2009). DST is an appealing task design in which it combines "traditional storytelling with modern pop culture and technology" which immediately intrigues learners (Lowenthal, 2009). As discussed previously, DST is an excellent tool for learners to integrate their knowledge in different platforms of media into presenting their narrative tales (Garcia & Rossiter, 2010). DST realizes learners to be storytellers who utilised a "...palette of technical tools to weave personal tales using images, graphics, music, and sound...with the author's own story voice" (Porter, 2004, p. 1). This experience equips learners with the survival skills in a "media-varied environment" (Riesland, 2005; Robin, 2008).

DST also helps to reach out to learners who are diverse in their learning preferences and motivational aspects. Students have the opportunity though DST to express their mind and opinion about the issues presented in a text, which without technological intervention, many learners are reluctant to do (Harun & Shiratuddin, 2009). The informants also revealed apart from experimenting with technology, they affirmed that DST helps to express themselves digitally, which is less intimidating. These findings also further highlight Barrett (2006) who claimed that DST "facilitates the convergence of four student-centered learning strategies" as it engages learners, encourages learners to reflect for "deep learning" and integrates instructional technology. With appropriate technological tools such as editing software, learners empower themselves to be proficient in it as well as improving their knowledge acquisition, as a result, they are able to achieve the learning outcome which is to

produce a creative and authentic DST (Sadik, 2008). DST represents an innovative approach in the ever-changing education landscape which helps to improve learning in terms of subject matter and acquisition of soft skills such as critical thinking, digital literacy and motivation (Moradi & Chen, 2019).

Conclusion

The current generation of learners are labelled as digital natives who face less struggle in familiarising themselves with any form of technological tools. The world is facing from the most pressing health threat, Covid-19 pandemic which poses devastating impact to all levels of society. Young children, adolescents and young adult learners have to be at home as all educational institutions are forced to be closed. Online learning which was previously perceived to be a support to a traditional classroom is transformed to be the only mode of learning. Online learning may impose certain challenges especially in a literature classroom that demands its learners to interact not only with the chosen text, but also to participate actively in discussion with the instructor and peers. Though this could still be done via online learning, however, its impact may not be so significant.

The findings from this study bring out several implications. First, it has proved that DST is an effective pedagogical tool to help mediate the literary text and improve learners' comprehension on the issues and themes depicted in the literary text. By creating their authentic and creative version of the narratives, learners were trained to be assertive when delivering their voices during the process of transforming themselves into active participants in an online learning setting rather than being passive listeners. Second, DST could be perceived as an effective approach when it created opportunities for learners to improve their language proficiency and presentation skills. Learners needed to use appropriate language according to the context presented in the literary text and applied effective communication strategies to present their story. Third, the task provides learners with formidable literacy learning opportunities that help to increase their motivation and sense of confidence as well as develop their high order thinking skills while sharing their thoughts and experiences.

As the world is still severely impacted by Covid-19 pandemic at the point when this article was written, Malaysia Higher Education still engages the learners through online learning. Regardless, its drawback, online learning provides the prospect to tap into the creativity of digital natives. The learning outcomes from a DST project can be mediated through Web 2.0 technology, which promotes positive collaborative learning settings and opportunities for the employment of various multimedia sources during the production of digital stories. This study may aid other instructors and education stakeholders to better understand the impact of integrating digital storytelling into their classroom which could enhance learners' technological engagement and boost higher order thinking skills, whilst arming them with the 21st century skills.

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