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Ahed Salem Allawansah, Mustafa Bin Che Omar

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## The Importance of Digital Stories in the Educational Process

Ahed Salem Allawansah<sup>1</sup>, Mustafa Bin Che Omar<sup>\*2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> University Sultan Zainal Abidin, Malaysia.

E-Mails: <sup>1</sup> ahedsalem1213@yahoo.com, <sup>2</sup> mustafa@unisza.edu.my

<sup>\*</sup>Corresponding author: (Mustafa Bin Che Omar) mustafa@unisza.edu.my

### Abstract:

**Purpose:** The study aims to identify the importance of digital stories in the educational process. The study uses the descriptive approach where the research presents the concept of digital stories, their types, their importance in education, their advantages, and the stages of their production.

**Methodology:** The study utilizes the descriptive approach to explore the importance of digital stories in the educational process. The study employs the literature review to gather information and draw conclusions. The researchers analyze existing literature including academic papers, research studies, and relevant sources to comprehensively understand digital stories and their role in education.

**Findings:** The study concluded that the importance of digital stories as an education strategy lies in the fact that digital stories are compatible with the needs and characteristics of students and can be designed in a way that takes into account the needs of student's many stimuli such as images, sound, video, and animation. This deploys students' multiple senses, improves their interaction, and develops their learning motivation.

**Research implications:** The study suggests several implications for future research and practice. It emphasizes the need for training teachers and encouraging them to utilize digital stories as an effective teaching strategy. Further research is recommended to explore the effectiveness of digital stories in teaching gifted students and students with special needs.

**Originality:** The study contributes to the existing literature by exploring the importance and advantages of digital stories in education. It provides a comprehensive overview of digital stories, their types, and their specifications. The study also outlines the stages of producing digital stories, offering practical insights for educators and researchers.

**Keywords:** *digital stories; types of digital stories; advantages of digital stories in education; specifications of digital stories in education.*

### 1. Introduction

The technological knowledge and cultural explosion in our present time has made technology an effective means in the success of the learning and teaching process on the one hand and has caused many educational problems such as the abundance of information, a high number of students, and lack of teachers on the other hand. Therefore, new methods and means have appeared in education, including the emergence of electronic learning (E-learning), which uses modern communication tools from a computer and its multimedia such as sound, image, graphics, and electronic libraries, whether in the classroom or through distance education in order to deliver information to learners as quickly as possible and with less effort (Al-Herash, Muflih and Al-Dhuun, 2010, p. 27).

Education institutions are remarkably developing in the technical and academic aspects, especially concerning e-learning. This development requires teachers and students to acquire new skills that make students able to employ and use learning and e-learning techniques effectively. The use of modern technology and its employment in the educational process is essential and effectively achieves the goals of education (Abu Khatwa, 2011, p. 3).

E-learning takes place through interaction with digital content and Internet services. It means any modern technology used in education, depending on the computer inside or outside the school. The transition from traditional education to e-learning considers self-organization, participatory learning, flexibility, and individuality within an educational society of teachers, students, and experts (Ajmera, Dharamdasani, 2014, p. 90).

Many educators have pointed out the importance of e-learning, such as Arkorful (2014, p. 401), who believes that e-learning facilitates communication between teacher and student, between the students themselves, and provides courses at all times at the lowest cost. Harris, Hall, Mowriheyd, McAteer, Schmoller, and Graham (2004,

p.7) indicate the ability of e-learning to raise the level of excitement among students because teaching in it is presented in the audiovisual and written way, and it takes into account individual differences among students.

Mothibi (2015, p.7) confirms that the environment provided by e-learning is a rich educational environment whose sources are diverse because e-learning facilitates communication between the parties to the educational process (teacher, student, school administration, and parents) and stimulates teacher and student to develop their skills in modern technologies. Mothibi also confirms the effectiveness of e-learning in following up the training and education process, giving it a preference of 50-60%, and believes that it increases academic achievement by 25-60%.

The rapid development of educational technology led to the emergence of new technologies that did not exist previously, such as electronic stories, which appeared in the eighties of the last century by Joe Lambert and Dana Atchley, where they established the Center for Electronic Storytelling in Berkeley, California. The narrator narrated the digital story over (2-3 minutes) (Norman, 2011, p. 2).

Dahlan (2016, p. 4) believes that digital stories provide an educational environment that increases student motivation and interaction with educational courses in a virtual reality that is attractive and close to their sensory perceptions, making them love to deal with it.

Alismail (2016, p. 126) showed that digital stories are considered one of the modern and essential applications in educational technologies that can be used effectively and efficiently in the classroom, especially if designed and presented well. They are considered a suitable type of multimedia comprising static images, animations, voiceover, background music, and video clips.

### 1.1. Concept of Electronic Stories

There are many definitions for electronic stories. Al-Tatari (2016, p. 7) defines them as: "a group of stories to which a mixture of multimedia is added that includes images, sound, texts, animated electronic drawings, and sound effects. They are produced in a way that attracts students to use them in the educational process".

According to what Sussex sees (Sussex, 2012, .p. 2), it is "the process that combines verbal storytelling, graphic visuals, and music with modern techniques to produce a story."

Al-Aryan (2015, p. 9) mentions that "a story programmed electronically on compact discs (C.D.) through the use of some modern technologies related to sound, image, and animated cartoons so that it is suitable for the students; suits their tendencies and trends; and helps to develop their language skills."

Robin (2016, p. 18) defined it as an innovative form of a novel that revolves around an event, person, or place that may be real or imaginary, using sound, music, sound effects, pictures, graphics, and video to achieve educational goals.

Nubi, Al-Nafisi, and Amer (2013, p. 7) define it as "a set of educational attitudes to the traditional story that is transformed using computer programs to simulate reality in sound and image and design images in two and three dimensions."

Minga et al. (2014, p. 490) indicate that it is the process that mixes various educational media to enrich and support written and spoken texts with musical effects, moving images, and fictional art skills. This achieves an educational goal, and the process includes suspense and excitement compatible with modern twenty-first-century skills.

Atili and Nasr (2015, p. 528) define it as "formulating the educational content in the textbook in the form of short stories, and computerizing them to provide an opportunity to present the story to viewers among the student in animated images with accompanying sound, color, as well as other attractive factors."

### 1.2. Types of Electronic Stories

Dahlan (2016, p. 14) classified electronic stories according to the objectives for which they were found:

- **Personal stories:** They are stories that narrate essential events in a specific person's life so that these events affect the personality of other individuals through empathy, sympathy, or suggestion.
- **Directive stories:** These are stories that aim to modify people's behaviors and paths toward desirable trends, desirable behavioral models, or authentic values.
- **Historical Documents:** These stories deal with significant historical events to help us form a clear conceptual framework about the past and its events.
- **Descriptive stories:** These describe cultural, religious, and social issues by going over the place, time, and stages that pass through the story.

Whereas, Al-Harbi (2016, p. 282) classified it according to the type of digital medium used to present the content of the story, and the most important of these types are the following:

- **Photo Stories:** These pictures include a series of texts and digital images with a specific meaning or want to communicate an idea.
- **Presentations Stories:** Narrative presentations are prepared that include text and images and are presented digitally in these stories.
- **Video Stories:** Through these stories, pictures, texts, video clips, sounds, and music are presented together, and this type is the most widely circulated and used method in education.
- **Photo-essays Stories:** In this type, audio and visual media are used to present articles briefly and meaningfully.

- **E-portfolios Stories:** In this type of story, a digital photographic recording of the student's experiences and activities is presented for some time and is mainly used for educational purposes. There is also another classification of electronic stories based on the patterns of content delivery as follows:
- **The audible style of the electronic story:** This is an old style and is still considered an effective model for learning and good communication in a manner appropriate to educational environments despite the technical progress, as it works to form educational experiences by absorbing the educational message, and forming a mental image from words heard in the content of the electronic story. Thus, the receiver connects the sound and mental image (Jimmy, 2012, p. 8).
- **The visual style of the electronic story:** This style relies on images; static and animated graphics; audio and visual effects; and many other elements that attract students' attention and present various styles in displaying content, so it is considered one of the preferred styles (Razmia et al., 2014, p. 1542).
- **The written style of the electronic story:** This style is considered a helpful learning method throughout different educational stages. The story concept is more closely related to the written style. The importance of this style lies in the fact that it helps develop students' ability to think, reach the required meaning of the content of the written text, and understand the concepts and information it contains (Carbonara et al., 2007, p. 4).

In light of the different classifications of electronic stories, the researcher believes that all agree that they provide information, develop skills, and direct behaviors attractively and enjoyably.

### 1.3. Importance of Digital Stories in Education

The importance of electronic interactive stories, as presented by Mahdi, Darwish, and Al-Jarf (2016, p. 172), lies in their compatibility with students' needs and characteristics. Between the aspects of the electronic story and the electronic sequence in its course, the stories make the students live the story characters and realize what is happening in it, thus achieving the desired goal of using it and communicating the concepts effectively and proficiently to the students. In addition, electronic stories contain a lot of stimuli (images, sounds, video clips, and animations) that make them an environment saturated with media that involves more than one sense. Therefore, teachers can easily communicate information, absorb it, retrieve it, and employ it for the students.

Al-Harbi (2016, p. 278) views the effective teaching tool in the twenty-first century, given that it improves student interaction and enhances their understanding of abstract ideas and complex meanings. Electronic stories can display difficult concepts and complex skills quickly and more effectively. In addition to what Al-Omari (2017, p. 5) mentioned, it makes the student more fun, positive, and enthusiastic. It facilitates transferring the required information to be communicated to the student.

Nubi et al. (2013, p. 9) add that the importance of digital stories in the educational process lies in their ability to stimulate and activate students' educational experiences, develop students' motivation to learn, and deal with academic content. Whereas, Al-Arenan (2015, p. 42) indicates the importance of digital stories in acquiring abstract life concepts by presenting them visually and audibly, making it easier for the student to understand these concepts and acquire the desired skills and experiences.

### 1.4. Advantages of Digital Stories in Education

Mixing storytelling and multimedia in electronic stories enhances the opportunities for stimulating students' thinking about life matters and the possibility of linking them to academic subjects. They allow students to express themselves, enhance their individual feelings, and motivate them to find new and creative ideas. It provides them opportunities to engage in self-representation to tell stories, interested in certain events and situations that positively affect their identity during school (Robin, 2016, p. 19).

Al-Harbi (2016, p. 284) mentions that electronic interactive stories have multiple advantages, the most prominent of which are the following:

- They make students happier, more satisfied and enjoy learning because they study in their preferred way.
- Teachers can work on their weaknesses in the curricula, as they can be used to teach skills not included in the academic content.
- Provide a model for mobile learning where it can be displayed and learned from inside or outside the classroom and at any time.
- The ease of storing and retrieving them and making the required modifications at any time according to educational requirements, situations, and circumstances.
- They allow the teacher and student a vast space for creativity in creating and presenting educational content.
- They can be designed, prepared, and equipped with ease and do not require advanced computer skills.

Nubi et al. (2013, p. 7) mention that the student's view of an electronic story with its components such as moving and animated graphics, multimedia, and animated images brings many benefits, most notably the following:

- They accelerate the learning process and provide the student with advanced learning experiences and skills at an early stage.
- They help to develop cognitive aspects of students by providing the student with an eloquent Arabic language they may be lacking in their family environment, as language is the first tool for cognitive growth.

- They meet the needs of students and satisfy their desires, such as the love of discovery and curiosity, which makes them discover something new in each story, competition, and enthusiasm, which in turn, makes them aspire to achieve more excellence and creativity.

Al-Aryan (2015, p. 43) offers other advantages, which are:

- The student can use them anytime and anywhere they want.
- Train the student to listen well and pronounce correctly.
- They can find several additional copies without the need for special or expensive devices.

### 1.5. Elements of Digital Stories

Elements of Digital Stories include the core idea, dramatic inquiry, sound effects, narrator's voice, brief content, and progression. These elements constitute the starting point for working on digital stories according to their different classifications (Foley, 2013, p. 12).

### 1.6. Digital Stories Specifications in Education

Electronic stories are characterized by certain specifications that must be available, and they are as presented by Dahlan (2016, p. 18) as follows:

- The story contains situations and ideas that attract students' attention.
- The story design includes elements of suspense and pleasure through sound, image, movement, dialogue, colors, and sound output.
- The story is short, so the students get energized watching and listening to it.
- The story is characterized by easy sentences, phrases, and words to make it easier for the student to understand and follow its photographers.
- That electronic stories include feelings of kindness, love, happiness, optimism, and fun. They move away from terrifying situations and sharp emotions such as injustice and painful torture that adversely affect the same student.
- The story suits students' ages, mental and linguistic levels.
- It provides students with new experiences and knowledge.
- They assumed that the end was happiness and joy.
- It must be easy to operate and use by students.

### 1.7. Stages of Producing Digital Stories

The process of producing interactive stories goes through specific steps, which are as follows: (Kotluk & Kocakaya, 2016, p. 89).

**The first stage: Determining story field:** In general, the story field must be determined, both in the cultural, religious, imaginary, historical, heritage, and geographical field.

**The second stage: Writing story text:** In this step, the story's main idea is determined, and the story writer may rewrite it many times to reach the final shape of it.

**The third stage: Preparing the scenario:** The scenario determines the general form of the story, and the multimedia elements that will be used in the story are chosen to make the story more exciting for students.

**Fourth stage: Preparing the photo scenario:** In this step, the text and the multimedia intended to be used in certain situations in the story and with small and precise details that play a role in facilitating the implementation of the next step will be done.

**Fifth stage: Obtaining sources:** At this stage, the multimedia necessary to produce the story is obtained via the Internet through a personal computer or through its auxiliary devices such as a digital camera or a scanner.

**Sixth stage: Production:** Within this step, the electronic store is designed with the help of appropriate programs, such as Movie Maker, Photo-story, and multiple other programs.

**Seventh stage: Participation:** At this stage, the electronic story is shared by providing students on the Internet, any internal network in the school, or on CD cylinders.

On the other hand, Tatriy (2016, p. 20) put other steps for producing and designing electronic stories. The steps include:

- **Defining the digital story topic and the purpose of it:** Here, the teacher determines the topics of the stories and the goal to be achieved from the presentation of each electronic story.
- **Preparing the story scenario:** Here, the story scenario is prepared and written in detail by identifying images and choosing the sound effects to be accurately used in parts of electronic stories.
- **Collecting images, drawings, sound effects, music, and text:** Within this stage, the multimedia is determined from images and drawings, with the help of the programs designated for that and the sound through audio recordings based on specific devices.
- **Production of the electronic story with the use of appropriate programs:** Within this stage, digital stories are produced by resorting to the following programs, Adobe PhotoshopPhotoshop, Adobe Audition CS6, Adobe Flash CS6, CS6, Adobe After Effect CS6, and Adobe Primare CS6.



- **Displaying the electronic story:** At this stage, the electronic story is shown in front of students through the computer.

## 2. Conclusion

In conclusion, the most important results of this research can be summarized, as it becomes clear from all of the above.

- The digital story in education means formulating educational content in the form of electronic stories and computerizing them in a way that allows it to be presented to learners in the form of animated images, video, or animation with accompanying sound, colors, texts, and sound effects that make this educational content more exciting and attractive to students.
- The digital stories used in the education process are classified into 1- Photographer stories that include texts and pictures to communicate a specific idea; 2- Video stories that display videos, sounds, and music together, which is the most used type; 3- The stories of video articles that use audiovisual media to present articles briefly. Digital stories are classified based on their goals on personal stories that narrate important events to affect learners' personalities through reincarnation, sympathy, and directed stories aimed at modifying the behavior of learners towards desirable directions.
- The importance of digital story as a strategy of education is that it is suitable for the needs and characteristics of students, as it can be designed in a way that meets their needs and characteristics. Digital stories include many means of attraction and suspense, employ all students' senses, and increase attention and motivation for learning. Many researchers consider it an effective teaching tool because it improves students' interaction and enhances their understanding of abstract ideas and complex meanings. Others added that digital stories can stimulate student educational experiences, decrease boredom, develop educational and moral concepts,
- One of the advantages of digital stories in education is that they make the student more satisfied and enjoy education, as they are studying in a way that helps the teacher identify their weaknesses in educational content where it can be used to teach skills that this content does not include. The digital story represents a mobile education model that can be used anytime inside and outside the classroom. A digital story is an educational content that is easy to store and modify at any time according to the requirements of the educational situation. It trains students in good listening skills and proper pronunciation.
- The digital story elements are classified into: (a fundamental idea, a dramatic inquiry, an audio impact, the narrator's voice, a brief content, and a presentation).
- In order for the digital story to be an effective teaching method, it must contain certain specifications, including that the digital story should include situations and ideas that attract the student's attention, that the digital story should not be extended so that the student does not get bored, and that the design of the digital story is interesting through sound, images, movement, and colors. The digital story includes feelings of love, happiness, and sympathy and avoids violence, injustice, and torture. The digital story should suit the students' ages, mental and linguistic levels and provide new experiences and knowledge.
- The digital story production process goes through several stages, including defining the subject and purpose of the digital story, preparing the scenario for the digital story, collecting sound effects, images, graphics, music, and texts, producing the digital story using appropriate programs such as (adobe photoshop, adobe flash cs6) to present the digital story to students.

## Recommendations:

- Training teachers and encouraging them to use digital stories as an effective teaching strategy in improving achievement and overcoming learning problems.
- Designing digital stories that support educational content and compensate for weaknesses.
- There is a need to use digital stories in teaching students with learning difficulties and distraction because they increase attention, simplify abstract concepts, and employ students' multiple senses in the education process.
- Encourage researchers to conduct studies on the effectiveness of using digital stories in teaching gifted students and students with special needs.

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