

# Acceptability of Digital Storytelling in Language and Literature Education: An Inquiry Based on Teacher and Student Approval

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**Abstract.** Current investigations into the deployment of digital storytelling in Language and Literature education remain insufficient. Interviews with teachers and students reveal that digital storytelling enhances student engagement, fosters diverse competencies, and bolsters independent learning and creativity. Challenges for educators include mastery of technology, allocation of time, and management of learner variability. Learners express enthusiasm for digital storytelling, noting its capacity to enrich classroom engagement and elevate motivation and participation. Recommendations for broader educational adoption include educator training, resource provision, and pedagogical strategy refinement.

**Keywords:** Storytelling methodology, innovation in Language and Literature education, instructional design, digitalization.

## 1. Introduction

Storytelling as an instructional approach utilizes narratives to facilitate subject knowledge acquisition and comprehension, engaging students with captivating plots. This pedagogy aims to spark interest, evoke emotions, and stimulate thought, positioning narrative as the pivotal teaching tool. In Language and Literature education, storytelling frequently underpins the teaching of literary works and the development of linguistic expression and communication skills.

Storytelling embodies various formats, its adaptability making it suitable across different disciplines and educational levels. Contemporary research predominantly focuses on traditional text-based outputs, such as story texts or extensive reading of books. However, investigations into modern storytelling methodologies, particularly those employing digital media and creative tools, remain limited. This research aims to explore and validate digital storytelling as an innovative pedagogical method, assessing its effectiveness in enhancing students' comprehensive linguistic proficiencies and capabilities in written and oral expression through the use of digital platforms and creative instruments.

## 2. Literature Review

Storytelling has consistently played a crucial role in Language and Literature education, enabling students to grasp language and literature more profoundly through vivid narrative plots. With the advent of the digital era, digital storytelling emerges as an innovative practice within Language and Literature teaching contexts.

The *Compulsory Education Language and Literature Curriculum Standards (2022)* [1] articulate the overarching goal of employing diverse reading strategies to cultivate independent reading capabilities. Students are expected to engage with everyday texts, including books, newspapers, and magazines, appreciate literary works at a preliminary level, and comprehend simple classical Chinese with the aid of reference materials. The standards emphasize the acquisition of listening and expressive skills, advocating for civilized oral communication and social interaction. Written expression, aimed at articulating observations, experiences, and thoughts clearly and coherently, is also highlighted. Within this framework, storytelling as a component of Language and Literature education receives emphasis. These standards not only offer theoretical backing but also lay the groundwork for the innovative implementation of digital storytelling. "Through the processes of

imagination and storytelling, students can gradually transcend traditional writing constraints, thereby enhancing their writing proficiency."

Wei, Q. (2023) [2] centered on Language and Literature classrooms, delving into the application pathways of storytelling, proposing suggestions and sharing practical experiences. This offers constructive insights for the real-world implementation of digital storytelling in Language and Literature education. Shi, W. (2023) [3] examined innovative teaching models under the new curriculum standards, highlighting that enhancing students' comprehensive language skills through limited classroom content alone is challenging. A lack of focus from some educators on students' specific needs for knowledge network construction and the failure to introduce targeted extracurricular resources using modern technology limit the effective expansion of students' learning content. This research investigates the role of modern technology in Language and Literature education, providing a forward-looking perspective on digital storytelling.

Digital technology serves as an auxiliary tool for curriculum reform, fostering rapid development in the educational sector and showcasing the advancement of contemporary education. Cai, X. (2023) [4] applied digital technology in classroom teaching, infusing Language and Literature education with diverse and interactive elements, thereby enhancing student engagement. Li, J. (2023) [5] emphasized the importance of educators updating their teaching methods to inject new vitality into instructional activities. By leveraging storytelling, educators can broaden students' knowledge horizons. Frontline teachers should base themselves in schools, adapt to the evolution of the times, and strive to enhance their teaching capabilities. Clinging solely to familiar teaching methods is inadequate; maintaining an innovative mindset and continually contemplating ways to improve educational quality is essential.

Digital Storytelling combines the art of storytelling with multimedia technology (Mellon, 1999), employing multimedia elements like images, sound, video, and animation. This narrative form leverages computer technology and internet media to convey stories in innovative and creative ways, often characterized by concise narratives. Digital Storytelling engages audiences through both visual and auditory perceptions, making the narratives more vivid and compelling. It allows for various formats such as web displays of images and photos, textual documentation, and multimedia software-produced short films or slideshows, offering narrators a broader creative spectrum. Chen, J. (2004) [6] posits that employing Digital Storytelling in education holds practical and research value.

### 3. Research Design

#### 3.1. Questions

In the digital era, the education sector continually seeks innovative instructional methods, with Digital Storytelling garnering significant attention. Against this backdrop, this study contemplates educators' attitudes towards Digital Storytelling in instructional practices and their awareness of its strengths and limitations. The current application status and potential challenges of Digital Storytelling in actual teaching contexts warrant examination. Additionally, the investigation extends to students' interest levels and the correlation between such interest and their motivational drivers in learning. To delve into these aspects, the following research questions are formulated:

For this purpose, the research addresses the following inquiries:

- 1) Attitudes and acceptance levels of teachers and students towards Digital Storytelling.
- 2) Potential conflicts between traditional Language and Literature teaching methods and Digital Storytelling.
- 3) The impact of Digital Storytelling on enhancing student engagement and motivation.

#### 3.2. Subjects

This study selects three students from a public middle school in Shandong Province as survey participants (identified as Student A, Student B, and Student C) and employs question interviews to explore their understanding of and interest in Digital Storytelling. Additionally, three Language and Literature teachers from the same school are chosen as interviewees (identified as Teacher L, Teacher

W, and Teacher Z), representing a novice, an intermediate, and a senior educator. This selection aims to capture diverse pedagogical perspectives on Digital Storytelling, providing comprehensive insights into educators' cognition, application, and its effects on students.

### **3.3. Methodology**

To delve into the acceptance of Digital Storytelling among teachers and students, this study employs interviews to gather pertinent information, aiming to explore their awareness and current application of Digital Storytelling for a comprehensive understanding. Targeted inquiries reveal the extent of Digital Storytelling comprehension among teachers and students. Perspectives on classroom implementation and challenges faced by this method are also sought. Based on the collected data, the study engages in statistical analysis and information synthesis for in-depth examination. By categorizing and organizing interview content, commonalities and differences between teachers and students are analyzed, leading to representative conclusions. This thesis focuses on the feasibility of Digital Storytelling in Language and Literature educational practices during the information integration process. This encompasses the method's flexibility, applicability, and compatibility with Language and Literature curricula. Through analysis of practical applications, the research aims to offer suggestions to enhance the efficacy of Digital Storytelling in Language and Literature education.

## **4. Data Analysis Results**

### **4.1. Teacher and Student Perception of Digital Storytelling**

The consensus among the three interviewed teachers highlights Digital Storytelling's role in enhancing student engagement. For instance, Teacher L notes the use of images, audio, and video resources in Digital Storytelling facilitates direct visual and auditory perception, presenting textbook knowledge in a more vivid and multidimensional manner to students. This approach stimulates student interest, improving their comprehension and acceptance of concepts. Additionally, Teachers W and Z mention that student participation in creating digital stories can augment their self-directed learning skills. Only Teacher Z points out that Digital Storytelling offers students a variety of linguistic expressions, thereby fostering comprehensive language activities including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This contributes to enhancing their overall language proficiency and deepening their literary appreciation.

All three students recognize Digital Storytelling as a method that employs digital tools (e.g., PowerPoint, video creation tools) for teaching. They note this approach makes the learning process more dynamic and engaging, aiding in heightening interest and understanding. Student A believes Digital Storytelling assists in understanding and memorizing key points. Student B highlights its benefits in stimulating creativity, imagination, expressive skills, and media literacy, emphasizing the importance of active student participation in learning. Student C views Digital Storytelling as an immersive and informative teaching method, focusing on students' comprehension and application of knowledge.

### **4.2. Teacher and Student Recognition for the Advantages and Disadvantages of Digital Storytelling**

The three interviewed teachers unanimously agree that the strengths of Digital Storytelling lie in its ability to present course-related knowledge to students in a more intuitive and vivid manner. It enhances student interest, enlivens the classroom atmosphere, and encourages student participation. Furthermore, Teachers W and Z note that this method invigorates classroom dynamics and motivates students, simultaneously improving their self-directed learning and collaborative skills. Teacher Z emphasizes that creating with digital tools allows students to express personalized views and understandings, fostering creativity and independent thinking. Teacher Z also highlights Digital Storytelling's ease of integration with other subjects, enhancing interdisciplinary connections and promoting comprehensive competency development.

Concerning the drawbacks of Digital Storytelling, all teachers acknowledge that this teaching method demands certain technical skills from both teachers and students, as well as adequate electronic device support. Teachers W and Z point out the potential for increased classroom time consumption, with teachers needing to invest more time and effort in preparing teaching resources. Teacher W observes that due to varying student abilities, the quality of digital stories can differ, potentially leading to errors that require timely correction by the teacher.

Students A and B highlight the transition from teacher-centered, passive knowledge reception in traditional teaching to a more student-engaged approach in Digital Storytelling. This method grants students greater autonomy and creative freedom within the learning process. All students acknowledge the superiority of Digital Storytelling in leveraging multimedia resources over conventional methods. The use of digital tools and resources renders the educational content more vivid and engaging, enhancing learning appeal and efficiency. Students A and B emphasize that creating and sharing stories through Digital Storytelling boosts student motivation and involvement. Student B also notes this method's role in fostering cognitive and emotional development, allowing for the expression of individuality and uniqueness. Students B and C believe Digital Storytelling, compared to traditional methods, better stimulates student creativity and cognitive skills. Integrating with digital technologies exposes students to a broader array of information and materials, expanding their horizons and interests. Student C mentions that co-creating stories with teachers through Digital Storytelling can achieve enhanced instructional effectiveness.

### **4.3. Feasibility and Challenges of Implementing Digital Storytelling**

Regarding the current state and issues in implementing Digital Storytelling, Teacher L highlights the insufficient mastery of modern educational technology among educators, especially in selecting digital story materials and applying technology. Additionally, Teacher Z mentions that employing this teaching method may necessitate extra training and preparation for teachers to handle digital technology. Teacher W identifies the challenge of appropriately allocating classroom time to ensure student participation while fulfilling the planned instructional objectives. Both Teachers W and Z note the variability in student knowledge and cognitive levels, and their unfamiliarity with digital tools could affect engagement levels. Moreover, Teacher Z emphasizes the need to prevent technology disparities from leading to inequity. Concerning the assessment of student learning outcomes post-implementation of this method, Teacher Z observes that the achievements of Digital Storytelling might be difficult to measure using traditional methods, necessitating novel evaluation approaches. Furthermore, Teacher Z points out that digital instruction might increase the likelihood of student distraction, especially due to other applications on electronic devices.

### **4.4. Potential for Teachers to Transition from Conventional Teaching Methods to Digital Storytelling**

In interviews regarding their routine teaching methods, three teachers presented distinctly different approaches. Teacher L employs a method that integrates multimedia with traditional teaching, characterized by the use of visual aids and an emphasis on fundamental teacher-student interaction. Teacher W prefers a more serious and conventional teaching style, focusing on direct knowledge transmission and less frequent use of multimedia and digital tools. In contrast, Teacher Z's approach is more innovative and interactive, often incorporating multimedia and gamified strategies to boost student interest and participation.

Teachers L and Z show varying degrees of enthusiasm for using multimedia and digital tools and engage more frequently in classroom interactions with students. Meanwhile, Teacher W's instruction is primarily traditional, with less student participation and interaction. From an adaptability perspective, the methods of Teachers L and W may be more suited to traditional learning environments, especially for students with a solid foundation and strong self-learning capabilities. Teacher Z's teaching style may be more effective for students with lower interest in learning or those who require more interaction and motivation.

#### **4.5. Relationship Between Students' Interest in Story-based Teaching Methods and Learning Motivation**

All students express that the use of Digital Storytelling makes the classroom more engaging and enhances their interest in the course content. Students A and C believe the application of digital tools enlivens the classroom, enriching their intuitive perception and interest in the learning material. Moreover, by participating in the creation of digital stories, they gain a deeper understanding of the text, leading to a more profound comprehension of the knowledge acquired.

Furthermore, Student A mentions that Digital Storytelling increases opportunities for active learning, fostering learning exchange and interaction among peers. Student B views this teaching method as a platform for showcasing individual thoughts and creativity, with additional learning from peers' projects. Through this approach, students not only assimilate classroom knowledge but also enhance their skills in using digital tools, organizing, and expressing stories. Student C indicates that this teaching method stimulates significant enthusiasm and engagement in classroom learning, reflecting Digital Storytelling's potential to boost student motivation and drive. Generally, students perceive this teaching method as making learning more enjoyable, challenging, and rewarding, offering a comprehensive and diverse learning experience beyond traditional lecture-based models.

### **5. Conclusions and Discussion**

#### **5.1. Conclusions**

The synthesis of data analysis leads to the following primary conclusions:

1) Teachers and students unanimously agree that Digital Storytelling plays a constructive role in enhancing student engagement and fostering the development of diverse competencies. It is particularly noted for its positive effects in intuitive presentation, autonomous learning, and multifaceted linguistic expression.

2) Both teachers and students acknowledge the significant advantages of Digital Storytelling in boosting student interest, participation, creativity, and independent thinking skills. However, they also note challenges related to high technical demands, dependency on equipment, substantial time and resource investment, and variability in student abilities.

3) Digital Storytelling demonstrates notable effectiveness in increasing student interest in course content, enhancing classroom interaction, stimulating creativity and expressive skills, and improving motivation and engagement. This teaching approach affords students a richer and more positive learning experience.

4) The main obstacles and challenges faced by Digital Storytelling in educational settings include mastery of technology by teachers, effective allocation of classroom time, management of student ability differences, technology and hardware resource requirements, development of new teaching assessment methods, and managing student distractions. Addressing these issues necessitates professional development for teachers, school resource support, and adjustments in educational strategies.

5) Students' favorable views on Digital Storytelling are primarily reflected in its positive impact on classroom appeal, interest, deepened understanding, learning exchange, skill enhancement, and learning motivation. They highlight the method's multidimensional and comprehensive benefits.

#### **5.2. Discussion**

The method has been acknowledged by a majority of teachers and students, presenting certain divergences from traditional teaching approaches. However, challenges persist in its application, necessitating the identification of core issues and the formulation of corresponding strategies. To address these, the following measures are proposed:

1) A comprehensive evaluation of schools and teachers is essential; selecting suitable candidates for teaching experiments is crucial. By carefully choosing these individuals, the promotion and

application of Digital Storytelling can be enhanced. During its dissemination and practical use, it is vital to collect and respond to feedback promptly, adjusting better align the teaching method with the current educational landscape.

2) Researchers often recognize the advantages of teaching methods while overlooking potential shortcomings. For instance, researchers may encounter limitations in their own abilities, a restricted understanding of innovative teaching approaches, and a superficial grasp of digital media. To elevate researchers' expertise, it is imperative to continuously enrich knowledge, broaden perspectives, and deepen the comprehensive understanding of Digital Storytelling.

Additionally, this thesis posits that within the current educational context of China, teachers' perceptions of teaching methodologies tend to be traditional. The adoption and widespread use of Digital Storytelling face significant challenges. There is a noticeable variance in teachers' receptiveness to this novel approach. Hence, it is essential to implement measures to transform educational philosophies among teachers, enhancing their acceptance of Digital Storytelling. This may involve professional training, adjustments in educational policies, and efforts to reform the educational system. Through such endeavors, obstacles in teaching can be gradually surmounted, facilitating the smooth integration of Digital Storytelling into educational practice.

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