

EXPLORING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE STORYLINE APPROACH IN ESL CLASSROOM

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Within the context of English as a Second Language (ESL) learning, there always seems to be a need for new and effective teaching strategies. It is crucial than ever to look out for cutting-edge methods that encourage engagement and adapt to the changing conditions of language learning. The storyline approach focuses on narrative-focused learning and has gained popularity due to how it helps language acquisition. The paper examines the effectiveness of the storyline approach in the educational process and considers its effects on language learning outcomes and the involvement of students. The research aims to understand the impact of the storyline approach, as well as its effectiveness compared to widely used ESL methods with the focus on ESL. Over the years, ESL teaching techniques have been continually evolving, varying from standard methods to task-based and communicative approaches, with a primary focus on meaningful communication and student engagement in the language acquisition process. This change gave the storyline approach the prospect for further development. A review of the literature was conducted to allow us to get a complete understanding of the storytelling approach and its value for language learners. Creswell J. (1997) highlights the way the narrative approach engages students, facilitates cooperation, and integrates a variety of subjects into a relevant, real-world context. Ahlquist S. (2012) recognizes the value of the storyline approach, pointing out how collaboration in groups connects theoretical and practical content. Researchers such as S. Ahlquist, S., & Lugossy, R. (2019) advocate for the storyline approach and the effective use of stories to help develop communicative language skills. Others, such as Mitchell, P., & McNaughton, M.J. (2016), address the use of storyline in foreign language learning process, focusing on its application in various contexts and its role in task-based language learning. Similarly, Kocher (2020) offers a theoretical basis and practical insights into the storyline approach, along with considerable suggestions for its use in ESL classes.

According to Ahlquist (2011) storyline approach is well-known in first-language contexts but is less popular in second language education, and recognizes its ability to promote language development, identifying the specific key features that contribute to its effectiveness [4]. The main components of the storyline approach which significantly influence its effectiveness include artwork, variety, imagination and made-up story. Ahlquist (2011) outlines the advantages of the storyline approach lie in its ability to offer a comprehensive language learning experience within an interesting and meaningful context. This approach also underscores the engagement 'in tasks that simulate real-world English usage and allow for the expression of creative talents' [4]. Insights into the effectiveness of the storyline approach are offered by Kocher's (2020) research, which also argues that experiential learning with storyline tasks can contribute to motivated, learner-centered, and

efficient educational practices, managing the difficulties faced by students in applying their theoretical knowledge of the language in the classroom [6]. Kocher (2020) presents a storyline approach as a valuable tool for the development of practical skills and overcoming traditional teaching methods, coinciding with 'motivational theories, constructivist approaches, task-based language learning, learner autonomy, action-based learning, and multiple intelligences' [6].

To understand the experiences and perspectives of the participants, this study incorporated qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques to explore the effectiveness of the storyline approach in ESL classrooms. The survey was conducted to collect information regarding participants' perceptions of the storyline's influence on their learning experiences and their involvement in storyline activities. With the aim to assess acquaintance with the Storyline approach of university students and gather insights into their experiences and perceptions regarding its effectiveness in ESL classrooms, a survey was conducted. The participants in the survey were technical students at Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute in Ukraine studying English for Specific Purposes. The procedure for this survey involved a series of questions aimed at gathering insights from the participants regarding their experiences and perspectives on the storyline approach in the context of language learning. The survey included questions addressing specific aspects of the storyline method, including student's familiarity with this strategy, their participation in storyline activities, the impact on their engagement and learning, and their opinions on the educational benefits of group work using the storyline approach. The responses were collected and analysed to understand the participants' views on storyline effectiveness in education and to identify common trends in their learning experiences. The participants provided invaluable insights into their experiences with the storyline approach and its impact on their learning experiences in an ESL context. A significant majority of respondents reported that they were barely familiar with the storyline approach. However, the promising perspective is that those who are familiar with the storyline concept participated in storyline activities before. Their experiences ranged from engaging in group discussions to entertaining games and simulations that helped them better understand vocabulary. Additionally, most participants reported feeling more engaged in the language learning process when the lessons incorporated a storyline, highlighting the motivating benefits associated with this method. As important aspects influencing their involvement, participants mentioned 'playfulness', 'encouraging creativity', and 'avoiding boredom'. Moreover, more than half of the participants expressed their convictions that the storyline approach facilitates the more practical application of language and other skills, highlighting its potential for practical skill application. Regarding the benefits, respondents pointed out the development of teamwork skills, creative thinking, and a better understanding of individual roles as advantages of group work. Along with that, the participants indicated that working in a group could lead to better information retaining, and stronger communication and interpersonal skills. Although many respondents had no experience with storyline activities outside of language classes, the positive feedback from those who had indicated that there is an open possibility for multidisciplinary applications for these activities. With a focus on the storyline approach's power to produce real-world experiences and the relevance to the lesson topic, participants indicated a need for additional storyline projects. In general, the survey results offer an understanding of the effectiveness of the storyline approach in ESL classrooms, showing that participants were highly engaged, used their language skills, and expressed an interest in further learning experiences. These results build the foundation for a deeper investigation of the effects of the storyline approach on language learning outcomes and can help ESL teachers develop their lesson plans.

In conclusion, this study focused on the effectiveness of the storyline approach in ESL classrooms and discovered specified advantages for students' motivation, engagement, and application of practical skills. This study, supported by a complete literature review, implies that the storytelling approach has the potential to be a fascinating and efficient strategy in language education. The supportive feedback from the survey participants underscores the importance of enjoyment, creativity, and relevance to everyday life in the language learning process. These results suggest that the storyline approach can be a valuable addition to ESL methods of teaching, offering students an exciting and enjoyable educational experience. Overall, the study underlines the positive impact of the storyline approach in ESL education on the learning outcomes and learning environment, providing insights for language teachers aiming to improve language learning experiences.

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