

DIGITAL STORYTELLING OF “MICROSOFT PHOTO STORY 3 FOR WINDOWS” TO IMPROVE THE INVOLVEMENT OF STUDENTS IN THE PROCESS OF LEARNING ENGLISH IN THE CLASSROOM

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Abstract: The use of technology effectively in the teaching and learning process is essential skills for teachers to help them make a complex subject simple for students while students themselves need more strategies and variation from teachers to help them to absorb every information more easily, particularly when learning the English language. The students are now living in the technology era, which means modern technological tools are around them constantly updated and very competitive. Thus, teachers as the main actors who have the responsibility to transfer knowledge to students must prepare themselves with technological skills. Without these skills, teachers' pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge for undertaking their daily activities in teaching will face serious problems in transferring any kinds of knowledge to students. In this paper, I would like to explain the Microsoft Photo Story 3 for Windows in my teaching context at the undergraduate level, particularly its benefits, and the obstacles and challenges in teaching English as a second language in Indonesia.

Keywords: *technology, Microsoft photo story, teaching and learning English*

Since the role of teachers is essential to counterbalance between their pedagogic and students' need, they must be ready to upgrade with more up to date technology. Teachers are now not allowed to employ traditional methods or teacher-centered learning anymore; the students need students-centered learning which requires them to have more active, realistic communication skills (Nunan, 1999) and technology is one and the most suitable means to fulfill students needs. Technological integration forces the teacher to improve the lesson and support students' learning (McCrory, 2008 in Mouze, 2011).

THE DEFINITION OF THE MICROSOFT PHOTO STORY 3 FOR WINDOWS

Digital storytelling of the Microsoft Photo Story 3 for Windows is a branch of storytelling that uses digital media to tell a story. “Stories are expressed through art, oral history, creative writing, speaking, photographs, music, news clippings, digital video, the web, graphic design, sound engineering, or animation” (Heo, 2009). In addition, Nelson, Christopher and Mims, (2009, p. 83) define it as “using images, text, and audio and video clips to tell a story”. By looking at its definition, the

Microsoft Photo Story 3 for Windows still has connection with visual literacy.

The Microsoft Photo Story 3 for Windows is useful to integrate into the teaching and learning process because it is a free to download and user-friendly interface, easy and simple to learn, and suits any level of learners. It also offers the combination of speech recording, music and pictures, photos, icons, text, color, and fun (Wilkan, Faugli, Milster & Hope, 2010) as the main basic function of visual literacy, which means “the ability to understand and use images, including the ability to think, learn and express oneself in terms of images” (Braden & Hortin, 1982, p. 38 as cited in Seglem & Witte, 2009). By mixing images with MS Photo Story 3 Windows, as a teacher, I personally believe that an improvement in the involvement of students in the process of learning in the classroom will be achieved. This is my basic rationale for choosing this medium as a tool to help me in my ordinary teaching job.

THE BENEFITS OF MICROSOFT PHOTO STORY 3 FOR WINDOWS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

The digital storytelling of Microsoft Photo Story 3 for Windows has many benefits both for teachers and students. Gils (2005) suggested that by integrating Photo Story 3 for Windows more variation than traditional methods in current practice can be achieved: personalization of the learning experience; more compelling explanations or the practicing of certain topics; creation of real life situations in an easy and cheaper way; improvement in the involvement of students in the process of learning.

In addition, Heo (2009) asserted that learners not only achieve a high

degree of student autonomy but also exhibit improved motivation and enhanced skills in visual and digital literacy. Furthermore, Photo Story 3 offers a practical and meaningful way to learn new technology such as how to use a digital camera, or scanner if students want to scan some pictures or to use the Internet or Google Images to get pictures and import them to Photo Story with text and audio, which also creates motivating students and promoting independent learner (Miyar, n.d.).

Furthermore, McLellan and Digital (2006, p. 68) noted that Photo Story 3 can help promote skills such as “visual literacy, collaboration, mastery of technology and creativity and problem solving while encouraging self-direction and personal initiative”. By integrating Photo Story 3 in teaching and learning, students may create their own personal story as one strategy to improve their ability in language skills (McLellan & Digital, 2006). On writing skills, Choice (2008) argued that Photo Story 3 proposes providing many different types of story maps to help students at all levels to further develop their imagination to enhance their writing ability based on story maps and being narrative interest catcher (Ohler, 2007 in Loerstcher, 2007). While Wikan, et al. (2010, p.138) concluded that with Photo Story 3 for Windows, “the learners enhance their digital literacy by being producers and not just consumers of digital media content. Being a knowledge creator implies that the learner is a producer on two levels: both as an active knowledge constructor and as producer of digital representations”. And students learn best when they are in the active role of

designer or constructor (Harel & Papert, 1991 in Wikan, et al., 2010).

THE POSSIBILITIES OF CONSTRAINTS WITH MICROSOFT PHOTO STORY 3 FOR WINDOWS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

It is undeniably that the integration of technology in teaching and learning process needs infrastructure support such as appropriate rooms, availability of electricity and accessibility of the Internet. From my point of view, the use of Photo Story 3 for Windows needs electricity, a computer or laptop, an LCD projector, and an active speaker. Without staff, the Photo Story 3 for Windows cannot be operated. Thus, the main problem when I use this medium in my teaching is the lack of electricity capacity and also the electricity shutting down sometimes (Tinio, 2003).

In addition, when students start to do their Photo Story 3 for Windows project, particularly in voice recording, we need a sound-proof room, otherwise, the sound recorded will be mixed with other voices which can affect the quality of the recording. The quality of the sound card of the hardware on the computer or laptop is another dilemma.

Another crucial problem that occurs when we use some pictures or icons and music instrumental background that we take from the Internet in the Photo Story 3 for Windows is the copyright law. Therefore, it is strongly recommended to put the 'source' of the website address on every slide of Photo Story 3 for Windows project.

CONCLUSION

Integrating technology in teaching and learning process can help students enhance their involvement in the topic. The Microsoft Photo Story 3 for Windows is one of the digital storytelling programs which is free to download and has a user-friendly interface, is easy and simple to learn, and suits any level of learners. Its ability to combine speech recorded, music and pictures, photos, icons, text, digital color makes it one of the most useful softwares for teachers to help them transfer knowledge to students, while students become more active and engaged in the topic and themselves become producers of digital representation.

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