

Developing Core Communication Competencies through Storytelling and Mobile Technologies

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Abstract

Language is the predominant mean of human communication. A natural human activity, storytelling in the form of narratives is a primary mode through which individuals and communities use language to communicate ideas and emotions, evident from fields of design and anthropology among many others. Stories can be simple or complex, real or make-believe, long or short; but regardless of their form, stories resonate and have the power to bring people to together, give life to ideas and support the continuation of cultural norms and practices. Research has demonstrated that regardless of age, individuals can use stories for their own ends e.g. in games, to acquire power during playtimes, during social functions etc.

This paper posits the centrality of developing storytelling skills among our young through formal K-12 education, in particular through the Language Arts classroom. It also discusses how information and communication technology (ICT), in particular mobile technologies can be tapped to tap the inherent potential within each child for storytelling. With specific references to iPad and iPhone applications such as Read-Me-Stories and Toontastic etc. and their use in home and school settings, the author hopes to demonstrate how mobile technologies empower individuals in storytelling by imbuing in them a deeper understanding of the story arc, appreciation for naturalistic dialogue and by providing them with a protected space for exploration and confidence building. The discussion will include a brief exposition on the game-ification of learning and how 'game mechanics' in these mobile apps are not only educationally sound but are also examples of learning theories well articulated.