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An Investigation into the Role of the Storytelling on Social Skills in Preschoolers

Jalil Eliassi Sarzali¹, Farzad ghanbari Jgrlovi² and Farzad Parse²

¹Department of Education, Payame Noor University, Iran.

²Department of Education, Ghasre Shirin Branch, Islamic Azad University, Kermanshah, Iran.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigation into the role of the storytelling on Social Skills in preschoolers. The study adopted the quasi-experimental method, and performed the pretest-posttest and follow-up test model without a control group. The sample size included 15 children that were selected by random sampling in three preschooler centers in the Ghasre Shirin city in Iran. we used the teacher form of SSRS (SSRS-T) includes three social skills subscales: Cooperation, Assertion, and Self-Control. .Experimental design for a month, and was performed and lasted for 12 sessions on the experimental group. After a week the Social Skills posttest and after 3 month the follow-up test were administrated on the subjects. The obtained data were analysed using the Descriptive Statistics and T-Test, showed that the difference between pretest, posttest and follow-up test in the experimental group, and creative storytelling as a new intervention , which that was used for the first time in Iran, enhanced social skills and its subscales: (Cooperation, Assertion, and Self-Control). The results showed effectivity and using of storytelling in the developing process social skills, and showed the effect storytelling, remained stable in the three-month follow-up.

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Introduction

Bayrami and Moradi (2006) state that social skills are compound processes that make person behave in a way the others know him/her as a capable person.

In fact, it can be said that social skills have a valuable function in children's life. Children who aquired suitable social skills, in communicating others and surrounding environment provide a better and acceptable situation. Social skills such as helping, demanding help or information, thanking, apologizing, initiating a conversation in any subject, answering the questions, following the rules, awaiting his turn, collaborating, accepting critics, demanding feedback for the work he has done, introducing himself provides his adaptation to the society, his integration in society, his communication and interaction with his peers and others (Çifci & Sucuoglu, 2004).

The process of social skills acquirement and rate of social adjustment among children and adolescents is a phenomenon which is studied in cognitive-social psychology (Babakhani, 2011).

The fact that the social skills acquired in the early life stage are really important necessitates enhancing the studies devoted to gaining social skills (Aksoy & Baran, 2010).

In the meantime, Preschools are not only the first educational institutions that children are introduced to, but also the first social environment apart from the family and close acquaintances. Thus, it may be argued that, apart from the family, preschools are the places where social skills are shaped for the first time (Çimen & Koçyigit, 2010).

Pre-school period is a critical phase in the acquisition of social skills just as in all developmental phases.

The social skills acquired in early years form the basis of successful and effective communication with others (McClellan & Katz, 2001). As well as, preschool period is a period when Important experiences for the development of children are experienced and observed, the experiences obtained in this period leave significant marks in the development of children.

Therefore, Social skill education, be it planned for the preschool period or other periods, should consider children's needs, environmental conditions, physical environment, children's age and developmental features. In addition, opportunities for children to use the social skill learned would enable them to internalize these skills and transfer them to real life. Individuals who complete their social development on time will become self-sufficient, socially responsible and beneficial people (Çimen & Koçyigit, 2010).

In fact, social skill education, various methods and techniques are used to ensure the acquisition of these skills. As social skills may vary with time and place, it is wise to develop curricula and use methods and techniques that are appropriate to the context.

In other hand, for teaching social skills we should use a method that is pleasant for children according to children's mental and physical structure storytelling in its creative form is of high value. In reality, storytelling is a multi-media and democratic method in wich children seriously act in storytelling. In this method, storyteller by providing multi-senses situation make students know themselves as a part of story world and easily mime hero behaviour. In comparison with the researches that only used simple storytelling for teaching materials or skills to the children one of the main

reasons of this program was the variety of activities, storyteller's innovative mind and emotional relationship between storyteller and children.

Storytelling needs no special equipment beyond the imagination and the power of listening and speaking to create artistic images. As a learning tool, storytelling can encourage students to explore their expressiveness and can heighten a student's ability to communicate thoughts and feelings in an articulate, lucid manner. These activities benefit the students in not only giving them the art experience but also in supporting daily life skills (Mokhtar et al. 2011).

In short, the importance of this study is for 3 reasons:

1. Charm and great stories in education.
2. emphasizing and focusing on the pre-elementary school.
3. paying attention to the social skills and its importance in children's present life.

2. Research Method

2.1. Sample and Procedure

The method of research was a quasi-experimental method using pretest-posttest and follow-up test model without control group. After selecting sample, before and after performance, the social skills were considered in sample group, and the data obtained compared.

The population of this study comprises all boys of preschool located in Ghasre Shirin's schools. The sample group included 15 children that has been chosen from 3 per-school centers in Ghasre Shirin during the educational year 2015. The sample size selected using random sampling. Stories were performed in 12 sessions during a month. Storytelling was done in a way that all testing materials were active in this process. Before starting each story a harmonic poem is sung to create more interest among them for hearing stories.

The primary out line of stories partly changed during the Performance of them, according to the situation, reaction of children and storyteller's creative action. But these changes done based on research objectives. Complement activities that is used in storytelling are as follows: singing the poems, dramatic movements, question and answer, painting and encouragement card.

2.2. Research Tools

SOCIAL SKILLS RATING SYSTEM (SSRS): The Social Skills Rating System evaluates the social behaviours of children and adolescents. The system includes teacher, parent, and student questionnaire forms. The SSRS is intended for use with individuals ages 3 to 18. It consists of three scales: (a) The Social Skills Scale consists of the following subscales: Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy, and Self-Control; (b) The problem behaviours Scale contains three subscales: Externalizing Problems, Internalizing Problems, and Hyperactivity; and (c) The Academic Competence Scale.

Items are rated by frequency and importance. Administration takes from 10 to 25 minutes (Gresham & Elliot, 1990).

In this study we have used the preschool Social Skills part in Teacher's form. The teacher form of SSRS (SSRS-T) includes three social skills subscales (10 items each): Cooperation, Assertion, and Self-Control. Items are rated by frequency and importance. The Frequency rating provides information on "how often" a perceived behavior occurs in the classroom and at home (2 = very often, 1 = sometimes, and 0 = never).

According to the publisher, the SSRS was normed on 4,000 children by the developer of the scales. Internal consistency reliability finding ranged from .75 and .93.

Test-retest reliability at 4 weeks was in the .80 range. Criterion-related and construct validity were established by finding significant correlations between the SSRS and other rating scales (Abdi, 2010).

2.3. Data Analysis

As the study had only one group, data were analysed using means, standard deviation, tables, graphs and t-test of the dependent samples. Data were analysed using SPSS software.

3. Findings

In this section, the data obtained during the study was analysed and presented in tables along with interpretations.

3.1. Hypothesis

1. Teaching to the way of storytelling cause increasing cooperation among preschoolers.

The findings of t-test for comparing the dependent means in pretest-posttest and the children's cooperation proficiency in the statistical sample show that the average of sample person's performance in pretest (SD = 1.12, M = 8.40) in comparison with their performance in posttest (SD = 1.30, M = 12.00) have significant difference ($t = -22.54$, $df = 14$, $sig = 0.000$). The average of these person's performance in posttest also in comparison with the follow-up (SD = 1.22, M = 10.27) have significant difference ($t = -11.11$, $df = 11$, $sig = 0.000$). Therefore, according to the given significant levels in table 1 and its comparison with the rate of allowed errors 0.05 with the certainty of 95% the assumption of H_0 is rejected. i.e. There is a statistical significant difference in the performance of subjects in comparing pretest with posttest for cooperation proficiency, and comparing pretest with follow-up one (table 1).

3.2. Hypothesis

2. Teaching to the way of storytelling cause increasing assertion among preschoolers.

Table 1. Statistical indexes of cooperation skill in the subjects.

statistical indexes	N	Mean	sd	t	df	Sig	Correlation
pretest	15	8.40	1.12	-22.54	14	0.000	0.876
posttest	15	12.00	1.30				
pretest	15	8.40	1.12	-11.11	14	0.000	0.854
follow-up test	15	10.27	1.22				

Table 2. Statistical indexes of assertion skill in the subjects.

statistical indexes	N	Mean	sd	t	df	Sig	Correlation
pretest	15	9.33	1.75	-16.00	14	0.000	0.851
posttest	15	13.60	1.95				
pretest	15	9.33	1.75	-9.88	14	0.000	0.881
follow-up test	15	11.53	1.76				

Table 3. Statistical indexes of self-control skill in the subjects.

statistical indexes	N	Mean	sd	t	df	Sig	Correlation
pretest	15	8.53	1.68	-18.41	14	0.000	0.902
posttest	15	12.06	1.66				
pretest	15	8.53	1.68	-13.22	14	0.000	0.965
follow-up test	15	10.20	1.42				

The findings of t-test for comparing the dependent means in pretest-posttest and the children's assertion proficiency in the statistical sample show that the average of sample person's performance in pretest (SD = 1.75, M=9.33) in comparison with their performance in posttest (SD = 1.95, M = 13.60) have significant difference ($t = -16.00$, $df = 14$, $sig = 0/000$). The average of these person's performance in posttest also in comparison with the follow-up (SD = 1.76, M = 11.53) have significant difference ($t = -9.88$, $df = 14$, $sig = 0.000$). Therefore, according to the given significant levels in table 2 and its comparison with the rate of allowed errors 0.05 with the certainty of 95% the assumption of H_0 is rejected. i.e. There is a statistical significant difference in the performance of subjects in comparing pretest with posttest for self-control proficiency, and comparing pretest with follow-up one (table 2).

3.3. Hypothesis

3. Teaching to the way of storytelling cause increasing self-control among preschool children.

The findings of t-test for comparing the dependent means in pretest-posttest and the children's self-control proficiency in the statistical sample show that the average of sample person's performance in pretest (SD = 1.68, M=8.53) in comparison with their performance in posttest (SD = 1.66, M = 12.06) have significant difference ($t = -18.41$, $df = 14$, $sig = 0/000$). The average of these person's performance in posttest also in comparison with the follow-up (SD = 1.42, M = 10.20) have significant difference ($t = -13.22$, $df = 14$, $sig = 0.000$). Therefore, according to the given significant levels in table 3 and its comparison with the rate of allowed errors 0.05 with the certainty of 95% the assumption of H_0 is rejected. i.e. There is a statistical significant difference in the performance of subjects in comparing pretest with posttest for self-control proficiency, and comparing pretest with follow-up one (table 3).

4. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigation into the role of the storytelling on Social Skills in preschoolers.

The results of the study indicate the significant distinction between the means of the scores in pretest-posttest and follow-up test one in the case of the study. This distinction results from the influence of Storytelling as an educational method on the behaviour of subjects during teaching.

In relation to the first hypothesis, proofs show that creative storytelling is the cause of increasing children's cooperation in class activities. These findings are coordinated with the findings of the studies of Alencar et al. (2008); Homaei et al. (2009) & Mokhtar et al. (2011). In explaining this finding we can mention Bandura (1997) idea, he expresses learning through imagination and observation as an important factor in changing children's behaviour. In fact, in this case children are influenced by characters behaviour and their personality. At last, they want to make themselves like the heroes of the story.

In relation to the second hypothesis proofs show that the findings of the study are similar to the findings of Greene

(1999) that know teaching as an effective factor in increasing courage among them. The main difference of this study was the effect of storytelling that is stable even after 3 months. The reason of this insolubility may due to children's active role in the process of storytelling and knew themselves as a part of that story.

In relation to the third hypothesis that shows the function of storytelling on self-control should be said that this finding is coordinated with the findings of the study Park (2010) and Maddahi et al. (2011) used the play as an important involvement in increasing children's self-control. In explaining this finding we can refer to the Green's saying that says little children are more and easily influenced by characters behaviour and their personality.

According to the results, a meaningful difference exists between the pretest-posttest and follow-up test mean scores of children in the Research. This difference showed that the storytelling Program helped children acquire social skills.

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