

ENGAGING STUDENTS IN VIDEO CREATION ON CROSS-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING: A NEW APPROACH TOWARD DIGITAL STORYTELLING

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Abstract

Digital Storytelling is one of the multiliteracies' pedagogy. It is not only helping students learning theoretical knowledge but also developing their competencies in term of listening, speaking, as well as reading and writing skills. At present, video creation also becomes an effective media in observing, learning, and also developing students' abilities, especially in cross-cultural understanding class. In this study, I suggest performing digital storytelling in making video creation on the cross-cultural understanding material. The purpose of this study is to build the student's multiliteracies, that is Narrative literacy, Information Literacy, Visual Literacy, Media / Technology literacy and also Multimodality literacy. I organize an activity for undergraduate students to create digital stories. Participants are divided into 5 groups. Every group create digital stories and have his own theme; i. e. American Values, Stereotypes, Male and Female Relationship, Non-Verbal Communication and Culture Shock. The findings of this study suggest that the technique of digital storytelling can be used effectively in classroom settings to teach cross-cultural understanding.

Keywords: digital storytelling, multiliteracies, literacy, cross-cultural understanding

1. INTRODUCTION

Literacy is the construction and reconstruction of knowledge, attitudes, values, skill and experience. Literacy tool is a language. It can be realized or communicated in various ways such as verbal language, visual language, gestures and body language. The New London Group (1996) makes a pedagogy framework called Multiliteracy Pedagogy to respond the various of communication and the diversity of languages and cultures. In this case, pedagogy should provide a multidimensional learning environment that is multilinguistic and multicultural communication. It is the fact that many countries use multiliteracies pedagogy as a method in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) (Leimbigler, 2014).

Digital Storytelling is one of the multiliteracies' pedagogy. It is not only helping students learning theoretical knowledge but also developing their competencies in term of listening, speaking, as well as reading and writing skills. These are four basic skills of English as a second language as stated by language learning portal "*Languages are generally taught and assessed in terms of the 'four skills': listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening and reading are known as 'receptive' skills while speaking and writing are known as 'productive' skills*".

A Diamond Institute – one of rising star institutions in Central Java Indonesia – provides a cross-cultural understanding (CCU) curricula for fifth-semester students of English Education Department. This is a splendid thing because CCU is a practical way to understand other's culture by using language and culture in an appropriate manner.

In this study, to engage students in making video creation on CCU course also becomes an effective media in observing, learning, and also developing student's abilities. This belongs to digital storytelling which has been used to share knowledge, wisdom, moral and cultural values (Widodo, 2016). Video making on digital storytelling also enables students for educating students'

narrative literacies. They can express everything including their feeling and thoughts. Moreover, it is a socio-cognitive process also. It is a process of creating stories, finding a relevant theme and presenting a story.

Widodo (2016) states that to facilitate storytelling as multimodal language skills, such as writing, reading, talking and listening; the incorporation of technology is needed. Specifically, in the context of undergraduate students as a higher education, the use of technology is very significant. Technological tools such as using a computer and the Internet is a rapid development of global knowledge in this digital era. Students and lecturers can use video making on digital storytelling as one of these tools. In fact, the video creation on digital storytelling can help students create and tell stories. It can be a lesson hook; as a way to simplify a classroom discussion, a way to integrate multimedia into the curriculum and to ease difficult content more comprehensible (Lunce, 2011). This hook is particularly on the comprehension course such as cross-cultural understanding. Cross-cultural understanding is one of the fifth-semester curricula. It is concerned with understanding people from different culture backgrounds or people's culture so that we can construct our attitudes and world view more tolerable and generous toward different ways that may be shown by citizen of other countries (Pujiyanti & Zuliani, 2014). Because CCU is a way to comprehend other's culture, the use of video making on digital storytelling can be very beneficial. I determine to research about video creation on digital storytelling of the fifth semester to reveal how easy and powerful and simple the media can be. It can be best teaching practice in the classroom. Learning project, teaching and research projects can all be structured and presented as digital stories. Many published studies about digital storytelling is scarcely concerning to video making on CCU. The aim of this research report is to explore an alternative perspective that the use of video making on CCU as digital storytelling is prominent. To investigate this, the following questions guide the present study:

- a. In what ways does video-making on CCU engage students in the creation and presentation of digital stories?
- b. What are students' responses to this video-making on CCU as they engaged in this project-based learning?
- c. What does English lecturer learn from this video-making on CCU oriented teaching practice?

The purpose of these research questions is to capture the use of video creation on CCU as digital storytelling extending five months of both students and lecturer. This documentation can assist to a better understanding of how video creation on CCU as an effective media helps students comprehending CCU course. By capturing this documentation, it can be seen that students build multiliteracies, i.e narrative literacy, information literacy, visual literacy, media/technology literacy and also multimodality literacy.

1.1 Video creation of Digital stories as a tool for comprehending cross-cultural understanding

Connelly & Clandinin (in Widodo, 2014) affirms that humans are storytelling organisms. They, individually and collectively, lead storied lives...and tells stories of their lives. Stories are one of the platforms for humans to make sense of the world around them. Through stories, humans can accumulate their experiences, thoughts and also feel. Moreover, Lee (2015) argues that a story is a way of constructing and representing knowledge and experience sociohistorically situated a particular social context. In the context of English language learning, students learn language through reading or listening to stories. Armstrong (in Garrety, 2008) explains that "*digital storytelling is a process that blends traditional storytelling with technologies and media of the digital age-images, video, audio and personal narrative*". The video is one of the digital storytelling's technological tools. Through video creation, students can explore their four basic skills and also reinforce their skills in research, problem-solving, organization, writing and

presentation.

Cross-cultural understanding knowledge can include information of why people are and behave in a certain way. Obtaining deeply with political, economical, historical and societal information of a particular culture will help people comprehend the reasons behind people's behavior. Observing these complicated parts, it is easier to use video creation to explain CCU's material. Students can understand and explain better about the concept of cultural awareness, the importance of culture at the workplace, cross-cultural communication, stereotype, intercultural communication, non-verbal communication (including body language, body position), cultural shock and cultural conflict.

1.2 Digital storytelling as a genre approach in language education

Digital storytelling is a genre that combines the use of technology and telling a story in which a particular technological tool mediates the telling of a story (Widodo, 2016). The video is a part of this media and can be a terrific vehicle for illustrating a point or creating a visually dramatic presentation in order to explore the CCU's material. For example, instead of just define orally of what sign language is, a video could be used to explore students perform any kind of sign language from another country. Bruner and Vygotsky (in Widodo, 2016) says "a series of pedagogical stages/task serve to scaffold students' learning through their interactions with more knowledgeable peers or teachers and their engagement with instructional tools". These stages are building knowledge of the field, joint construction of knowledge and independent student construction of knowledge. Text circle is one of genre-based instruction and pedagogical stages rarely implemented. Students share their stories each other, recognize the language use in context, and empower them to be independent learning and analyze the text.

As discussed in the earlier that digital storytelling as an emerging genre, it highly increases attention from language practitioners especially in education domain. They can make learning process well documented. Several studies were undertaken with adult learners in the ESL context and reported the effectiveness of multimedia stories on the development of listening comprehension (Lee, 2014, Ohler, 2008, Reinders, 2011 in Widodo 2016). Furthermore, students can create digital storytelling based on their specialized topics as digital storytelling has been used widely in content-based instruction. In the context of EFL Learners', Tahriri & Tous (2015) investigated the impact of digital storytelling (DST) on EFL learners' oracy skills and their motivation towards the use of DST instruction. Another study by Hung, Hwang & Huang (2012) examined a project-based Digital Storytelling approach for improving students' learning motivation, problem-solving competence and learning achievement by the elementary school. Sweeney-Burt (2014) reported that implementing digital storytelling as a technology integration was useful toward primary school children. In spite of this growing research, there is still little research on the use of video making on CCU in the higher education context.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This 5-month research was implemented for undergraduate students of English Education Department in Diamond Institute, Central Java, Indonesia because the institute offered CCU course. The nature of this study was action research (AR) because CCU Video creation of digital storytelling is an instructional tool for empowering both students and lecturers to become creators of their stories. The purpose of the project was to engage and empower both students to use video creation as a tool for learning English through creation and presentation of digital stories. In this fieldwork, I played a role as a researcher. I organize an activity for undergraduate students of the fifth semester to create digital stories. These students were motivated to learn CCU with technology. During the fieldwork, I positioned myself as an outsider to the field in order to bridge

the gap between participants as the researched and me as a researcher (Brunce, Flynn & Stag-Peterson, 2011 in Widodo 2016). The participants in this study were 30 fifth semester students of English Education Program. I divided it into 5 groups, each of them creates a CCU video creation and have his own theme; i.e. American Values, Stereotypes, Male and Female Relationship, Non-Verbal Communication and Cultural Shock.

All students have been learning 4 basic English skills (speaking, writing, reading and listening) for 2 years. Prior to the start of the empirical fieldwork, the lecturer gave some courses including teaching, guiding and presenting CCU's material. In the first five class period, students were taught and guided some CCU's material orally, next, the second three class period they must discuss some CCU's issues and present it in a group in front of the class. In the third two class period, students presented welcoming party and the last three meeting they have table manner course at a hotel. Starting from the third meeting, I asked students to be familiar with some video making tools such as Corel video studio, viva video, movie maker and they must master it. Those three software applications were used in this project for creating digital stories. Pedagogically speaking, the instructional activities include:

- a. Building knowledge of CCU's video creation: guiding students to comprehend a digital story along with process of creating this genre;
- b. Mutual story deconstruction: helping students comprehend the language of a story;
- c. Mutual story construction: scaffolding students to write a story and create a digital story;
- d. Independent story construction: allowing students to explore a story theme, write a story script, design a story map and storyboard, prepare multimodal elements, record their own voices and edit the digital story; and
- e. Story circles: providing the students the opportunity to share and celebrate their digital stories with others.

Below are the following stages:

Table 1: Stages of CCU's video creation of digital storytelling project

Stages	Details		
Stage 1: Introduction	Introduce lecturer and students to the video-making of digital storytelling project	Help students recognize the 5 themes: American Values, Stereotypes, Male and Female Relationship, Non-Verbal Communication and Cultural Shock	Assist the students to use corel video studio, viva video, and movie maker
Stage 2: Scaffolded Creation of Digital Stories	Guide students to create digital stories	Scaffold the students to draft the stories	Guide the students to import the story draft to Corel video studio, viva video and movie maker
Stage 3: Creation of Digital Stories	Students work together to create digital stories based on 5 themes chosen	The students rework and edit the story drafts	The students import the revised drafts into Corel video studio, viva video and movie maker
Stage 4: Presentation of Digital Stories	Afford the students the opportunities to present their digital stories in a video	Facilitate a conference on digital stories (peer feedback)	The lecturer gives feedback on students' video of digital stories

Stage 5: Reflection	Help students reflect on the process of creating video of digital stories	Assist the students to reflect on the presentation of the video	Guide the students to reflect on the entire learning of the video
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Students' story draft and video results, informal interviews and participant observations were empirical collected data. All the data were analyzed through an interpretative and narrative point of view. The data were categorized into 3 layers. First, moment-by-moment interactions (students-students interaction), second, characterizations of such interactions (how much students valued such interaction), and third interactional patterns (how students interacted with their peers). These three layers were analyzed and have a correlation to the three research questions. The thematic analysis intended to identify, analyze and report themes within data (Braun & Clarke in Widodo, 2016, p. 6).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Knowledge building and mutual story construction

In this study, students learned to understand the meaning, functions and also the use of technology to create a video. This knowledge building and mutual story construction prepared students for the creation of as digital storytelling. In particular, building knowledge of a story and Corel video studio, viva video, and movie maker as technological tool assisted the students to become collaborative story construction with their peers. In this phase, students engaged with how video creation of digital storytelling was created. Completing students with different types of knowledge such as building story, Corel video studio, viva video, and movie maker and language resources helped them to collaborate on video creation of digital storytelling.

On this particular record, students made a story script based on a chosen theme before. Here, narrative literacy and information literacy were very crucial. Writing a story script with their peers made them explore and express their thought and abilities in term of writing and listening. Discussing and searching the content of the material implemented this mutual story construction as in photo 1 below.

Photo 1: Discussing among peers to make a script



The lecturer let the students write down what they observed and let them think of what a story they would write. Any kind of information can be gained through the internet, hand out and also books. Students tried as hard as they can to find out material they want to write the script. They arranged a good script in narrative and effective way. They recognize that knowledge building and mutual story construction help them in making video creation.

3.2 Story circles and story text construction

In the previous text construction, the lecturer guided the students to choose one of five topics to be explored, i. e American values, stereotypes, male and female relationship, non-verbal communication and cultural shock. In the CCU course, the lecturer identified topics related to CCU's issues that the students could explore. Students also discussed stories' type or narratives the students wrote for video creation on digital stories. These two items, topics, and stories were the starting point for the creation of video digital stories. Before the students collaborated on writing a script they collected and selected some materials such as read and watched a lot of references from books, web 2.0 and youtube; discussed and saw some native speakers. Searching and collecting material from web 2.0 technologies simply helped students comprehend the content of CCU's material.

Students absorbed information quickly in images, video as well as text through web 2.0. They twitch speed in expecting and accessing media (Prensky, 2004 in Duffy 2008) so that it can make students ease in writing their own script. First of all, students determined the related topic on web 2.0. Later, they collected materials from it. Searching and collecting material through web 2.0 as visual artifact seemed to be simplest in video creation on digital storytelling. A visual artifact such as video from web 2.0 had to be relevant to the digital storytelling process. Gaining the materials, then students discussed among peers to make a script. Little discussion and argumentation among them in every group enhanced writing prompts, outlining a narrative, composing a structured essay based on their outlines, and critical thinking on the script. In this section, students built multimodality literacy. They were not only learned about reading but also writing as well as listening and speaking, later. After the script had been done, students created video either inside or outside the setting of the classroom by using Corel video studio, viva video, and movie maker. For example, one of five group created a video outside the classroom with American values as the topic and filmed it at a store. They attempted to describe what American values are. The students took a film in detail with a store as a location. The second group of CCU course created a video in one of a franchise store in Indonesia (see photo 2). Their topic was about German Stereotype. They tried to describe German's habit that is join drink almost everyday.



Photo 2: Creating a video outside the classroom

Another group of students in CCU course took video around the campus and inside the class. They created a video seriously as if they had a real fight. The next group tried to explore about non-verbal communication by practice it obviously (see photo 3).



Photo 3: Another video filming

Creating a video on digital storytelling enabled students to foster academic achievement and built leadership skills. The students became aware that video creation served as visual and media / technological literacy. Some students remarked the following:

- a. I think that the video creation is suitable as digital storytelling, because in that video we can deliver the content with our expression or full of expression when we tell it, and then before it, we must prepare everything, the one is making a creation of the content to make the viewer interest to watch our performances, like we tell in the storytelling.
- b. I think the best way to taught the material in CCU class. And also from the video, the students can know more about the material. It very supports to deliver the materials, because sometimes when the lecturer just delivery does not use video or presentation. In CCU class... that manner is the best way.
- c. Our response to make a video is happy enough because final test changed to make a video. It makes our group more understanding the material than only material without practice directly.
- d. It is an effective one to share our creativity through video and make us fun during the class or learning process. It makes more creative to explain about material on CCU by video or practice. We can understand more when made a video.

These positive students' perception could build their motivation to engage video creation on digital storytelling. Thus, video creation was a skill that students had to develop because they had to develop their four basic competencies and also their critical thinking, leadership skills and also foster academic achievement.

3.3 Lecturer's reflection on video creation of digital storytelling

Based on lecturer's reflection, as a whole, CCU's video creation of digital storytelling was rewarding. It reported that students served as active agents who played different roles, such as copywriter, scriptwriter, editor, and actor. All of this activities indicated that students built

multimodal literacy. In the knowledge building phase, they recognized that topics were a starting point for knowledge building. Along with this topics, the students became familiar with the skeleton of the story, language resources, and technological tools. They also debated that video creation of digital storytelling encourages them to use multiple skills such as searching information, writing a script, weaving voice, filming, and sharing a story with others through story circle.

Lecturer underlined was creating a video of digital storytelling built students' narrative literacy, information literacies, visual literacies, media / technological literacies and multimodal literacies. They learned various types of literacies including audio, video, text, image and voice in creating a video of digital stories. The lecturer observed that creating video motivated students to carry out a series of the task with engaged them in dialogic conversations, story creation, and story drafts. Lively discussion, negotiation, and sharing were also lecturer's underlined from this video creation.

4. CONCLUSION

In closing, video creation of digital storytelling among students from fifth semester English Education Program is a staged process. This process engages students collecting data, creating a script, analyzing the script and combining visual artifact with written text. This video creation requires students to become familiar with the computer, digital software, audio and video devices and also multi-literacy skills. This video creation helps students develop their content knowledge and literacies. Several literacies are learned by students such as narrative literacy, information literacy, visual literacy, media/technology literacy and also multimodality literacy.

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