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TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON DEVELOPING PRIMARY STUDENTS' IMAGINATION  
THROUGH STORYTELLING TECHNIQUE IN PALESTINE

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ABSTRACT

In the past few decades, school teachers did not use attractive PowerPoint material to teach students. They simply shared the information through storytelling. In this study, the authors illustrated interesting experimental findings regarding storytelling in Palestine. The purpose of this study was placed on the significance of storytelling in developing students' imagination. The authors argue that imagination is a psychological process that its nature, substance, and effects are social and cultural. The authors employed a (16)- item questionnaire to determine whether storytelling is beneficial and employing the aforementioned can improve students' imagination. It is a quantitative study whose sample consisted of (20) English teachers who teach primary levels in Jenin City, Palestine. The findings tie well with previous studies wherein storytelling strategy can affect students positively and encourage them write rich thoughts. Additionally, the findings are directly in line with previous findings which concluded that shy students became more motivated as a consequence of involving them in the learning process through storytelling. This experiment adds to a growing corpus of research showing that storytelling is effective. The authors recommend recently employed teachers, stakeholders, curricula designers to consider the above-mentioned findings. Further work should consider experimenting with two groups to pinpoint the effectiveness of storytelling on students' imagination.

Keywords: storytelling strategy, imagination, English learning, English teachers, primary students

## Introduction

Storytelling is a method of passing information from one person to another. This kind of teaching technique creates a habit for students when they need to write. Students rely on their imagination to familiarize themselves to solve writing problems (Jauvin, 2019). On the other hand, some teachers thought using narrative in the classroom was insufficient. Stories are available and easy to buy at a reasonable price. Storytelling is simple and practical (Wajnryb, 2003). Storytelling has been used as a teaching tool in teacher education, from elementary to university education, and nursing education. Furthermore, Imagination is important for learning and can help with cognitive development (Davidson, 2003). Some authors indicated that all knowledge comes in the form of stories (Schank & Abelson, 1995). Although this strong claim has been explored, it is considered a challenge. Stories are a typical way of thinking before the educational system even begins. We, human beings, already learning from Aesop's fables, fairy tales, or family history through our grandfathers or dairies. Indeed, tales or family stories have left a fingerprint in our minds as children. Stories are a typical way of thinking before the educational system even begins. We, human beings, already learning from Aesop's fables, fairy tales, or family history through our grandfathers or dairies. Indeed, tales or family stories have left a fingerprint in our minds as children. Unsurprisingly, there is common agreement among early studies at the beginning of the 2000s that stories are an effective way for organizing and conveying information and creating meaning in our lives and our surroundings (Green, 2004).

Young children frequently learn about historical events, different cultures, and individuals whom they will never meet. An imaginary story is a means for them to explore the world around them and get information from others. It is also a method of awakening, of revealing the invisible and unexpected. Children have a natural affinity towards stories. Stories generate magic; they sit entranced, mouths open and eyes wide, as they listen to their favorite tales; the youngster in nature is inappropriate. A student cannot stay still for extended periods; nevertheless, when the story is told, the student enjoys sitting still (Bsharat & Behak, 2021). Children are more likely to adapt to learning habits and improve communication abilities as a result of imagined storytelling. A picture in a story can inspire them to make up their own story or to add to the one they are listening to. Their thinking process will be aided by visualization skills, which will create a bank of ideas that should be converted into their spoken or written work. Recently, there has been a resurgence of interest in the art of storytelling. Storytelling conferences and festivals drew a large crowd. Imagination, according to Young & Annette (2007), "provides us with the choices that we see as possible to investigate." "The more fertile our imaginations are, the more options we can examine, and the more fruitful and completely we can explore their potential ramifications," they say. Pederson (1995) stated that storytelling is an initial step of education, and it is currently the only form of education in some civilizations. In summary, storytelling may well be the foundation of imaginative growth, and it is something that can be done successfully and in a variety of ways virtually every day, even if only for a few minutes. It will be an engaging class introduction that will readily capture students' attention.

## Statement of the problem

Researchers discovered that students cannot use their imagination when they write paragraphs. Furthermore, they argue that the storytelling technique can develop students' thinking skills and imaginative powers, as well as increase self-confidence, and make the learning-teaching process more enjoyable. Therefore, the study aims to investigate the reality of using storytelling techniques to develop students' imagination skills.

## Literature review

There has been a lot of research and evaluation are done to highlight how crucial it is for school students to develop their imaginations and how important they are in the learning process. The authors organized this part chronologically for clarity and systematicity, starting with the most current studies. The effectiveness of a good story has been noticed for centuries, and even nowadays, in the Hollywood industry and further areas. Some studies have stressed the benefits of utilizing storytelling to develop students' creativity from different parts of the world (Bsharat & Barahmeh, 2020).

Furthermore, according to Parkinson (2010), storytelling aids in the development of a wide range of skills in students. They fantasize, dream and deceive, and divert attention. These are not simply poor habits; they are also fantastic starting places for teaching an art that may help people pass on experience, train and apply imagination, build language skills, boost their confidence, communication, and creativity, among other things. Storytelling and story creation may also be important catalysts for the development of critical and analytical thinking abilities (Parkinson, 2010).

Storytelling encourages engagement. Students can learn as well as enhance their work by listening to peers, according to Pinzón (2016). Students can also demonstrate and exhibit growth in comprehension, tale memory, and organizing situations correctly. They may also increase their ability to communicate and employ nonverbal communication.

However, Gallas (2001) identified a challenge informally integrating imagination into instructional discourse. Educators understand the value of creativity, but it is tough to explain how, when, and why. "There is an idea of imagination, and this idea of imagination and narrative is overstressed by many researchers with slight discrepancies, but there is a consensus among researchers such as Maxine Greene, philosopher, social activist, and teacher, who believes strongly in the power of imagination". Furthermore, Egan (1986) agreed with previous studies and bemoaned the lack of imagination in school curricula, recognizing that while imagination is a difficult subject to study, he recognizes that the power of imagination is what we are attempting to teach. Because imagination is a powerful and unappreciated tool of learning, we need to reassess our teaching techniques and curricula with a more balanced knowledge of children's intellectual capacities. One of the most effective aspects of storytelling is that it stimulates the imagination, or, as many children have expressed, "it makes me feel like I am in a movie".

Phillips (2000) stated storytelling is a powerful instructional tool that has existed throughout history. In traditional learning environments, it is no longer often heard. It helps to create this kind of interaction among students and helps them to recall events much more. Not only that but also enrich students' ideas, enlarges students' creativity. Phillips program found that storytelling is can affect students' achievement in learning. Finally, Phillips argued that narrative plays an important part in the teaching of young children (Phillips, 2000).

### **Research questions (RQ)**

To fulfill the purpose of the study, the survey was seeking to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1: What is the role of using storytelling strategy in developing students' ability to use their imagination?

RQ2: Are there any statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.5$ ) in the role of storytelling in promoting students' imagination due to gender, qualification, and experience variables?

### **Pedagogical Setting & Participants**

The study covered 20 English teachers from both genders. Those teachers teach lower primary students in Palestine Jenin city. Furthermore, twenty teachers made up the study's sample, which represented 50% of the total population. Teachers from two schools, Al Zahrah Elementary Girls' School and Al-Karama Elementary Boys' School were chosen at random. The sample of the study is described in Tables 1, 2, and 3 according to the study's independent factors

### **Design of the Study**

To attain the study's goal and answer its questions, the authors employed a quantitative study. Abuhamda et. al. (2021) stated "Quantitative and qualitative methods are the engine behind evidence-based outcomes".

### **Data analysis**

Inferential statistics were employed to test the data. The authors used (One Way ANOVA) to analyze the results of the questionnaire. Several statistical techniques were applied, including standard deviation, means, frequencies, percentages. Means and standard deviations to each item were computed.

### Procedures of implementing the study

The authors distributed a questionnaire of (16) items for data collection. The questionnaire was used to answer the first and second questions of the study. It also aimed to gather information about using storytelling and its role in enhancing students' imagination. The authors had permission from the Palestinian ministry of education then they explained to teachers what they are doing. English teachers filled out the questionnaire concerning the rubrics given by the authors. To ensure validity, the authors sent the questionnaire to experts in the field to seek their remarks and comments. They discussed the suitability to answer the study questions throughout this questionnaire. The One-Way ANOVA test was computed to analyze the items of the questionnaire with the help of specialists in the field of statistics to answer the second question of the study. Finally, the results of the study were discussed and recommendations were circulated.

### Results and discussion

**Table (1)**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
M	8	40%
F	12	60%
Total	20	100%

**Table (2)**

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Diploma	1	5%
BA	17	85%
MA	2	10%
Total	20	100%

**Table (3)**

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 years	7	35%
5-10 years or more	13	65%
Total	20	100%

**Table (4)**

Domains	Number of items	Reliability coefficient
Using storytelling for enhancing students' imagination	16	0.82
Teachers' opinions about using storytelling strategy	7	0.88
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>0.85</b>

### Interpretation of data

Table (1) shows the distribution of the gender variable. The data shows the percentage of participants was in favor for female teachers. Female teachers were more interested to participate in this study because many females are interested in the teaching profession. This result is directly in line with Damme (2017). Damme

found that 82% percent of teachers among OECD1 countries for primary levels are females. Table (2) shows the variable of qualification. The authors determined to choose teachers from different qualifications to obtain different opinion upon the study topic. Most of teachers in this study hold a bachelor degree from different Palestinian universities. Table (3) shows the variable of experience. Data shows that the participants with more than 5 years of experience were more than participants with less than 5 years of experience. Thus, most of the respondents of the questionnaire got enough experience in teaching English for primary level students. Whereas table (4) determine the reliability of the tool used in this study. The authors used the Cronbach Alpha test. Data shows reliability coefficients are acceptable since the value 0.85 is reliable. Therefore, the authors decided to go ahead on the analysis of the two main themes.

### First question results

What is the role of using storytelling strategy in developing students' ability to use their imagination?

Table (5)

No	Items	Mean	S.D	Percentages
1	I employ storytelling in teaching	3.24	0.84	64.8%
2	I encourage students to express their ideas and thoughts freely.	3.24	0.84	64.8%
3	I use activities that familiarize students with using their imagination to solve problems.	4.30	0.58	86%
4	Using storytelling strategy affects shy students positively.	4.67	0.57	93.4%
5	Using storytelling affects students' motivation and their enthusiasm to participate in classroom activities positively.	4.36	0.61	87.2%
M6	Using storytelling improves students' academic level.	4.30	0.58	86%
77	Using storytelling encourages students to use their imagination for writing.	4.36	0.61	87.4%

From the above table, it is seen that the results that the first and second items received a medium degree of agreement while the others got a high degree of agreement. This is evidence that teachers support the idea of using storytelling in their classes. Teachers agreed among themselves that using a storytelling strategy can affect students positively and encourage them to write rich thoughts. The authors argue that using this technique is helpful especially for newly employed teachers who lack experience in teaching. Teachers who find it difficult to attract students' attention in the classroom may find storytelling a key to enhance their teaching style, developing students' imagination, and teach students away from traditional technique in teaching English as a second language. In addition, since Palestine is considered as a developing country, teachers have a golden chance to engage students with new ideas in teaching. Equally important, the structure of storytelling usually contains the main eliminants of well-structured paragraph i.e., topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentence. Therefore, teachers can consider storytelling as a reliable technique for developing students' imagination and produce well-structured paraphragma. Using storytelling affects students' motivation and their enthusiasm to participate in classroom activities positively. Shy students would benefit from this technique since it helps them to solve their problems rather than asking helps from others. Students with poor academic achievement may consider storytelling to boost their results.

### Second question results

Are there any statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.5$ ) in the role of storytelling in promoting students' imagination due to gender, qualification, and experience variables?

<sup>1</sup>The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) comprises of 37 countries that discuss and develop economic and social policy to improve economic welfare.

Study table (6).

Table (6) shows the results related to qualification variable.

Domain	Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Strategy	Between Groups	0.29	2	0.15	1.53	0.26
	Within Groups	14.33	133	0.11		
	Total	14.62	135			
Teachers	Between Groups	0.27	2	0.13	1.02	0.36
	Within Groups	17.28	133	0.13		
	Total	17.55	135			
Engagement	Between Groups	0.25	2	0.12	0.60	0.55
	Within Groups	27.40	133	0.21		
	Total	27.64	135			
Total	Between Groups	0.11	2	0.05	0.64	0.53
	Within Groups	11.21	133	0.08		
	Total	11.32	135			

From the above table, it is understood that there are no statistical differences at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) among the qualification variables. In other words, all teachers regardless of their background degree education agreed on the significance of using storytelling techniques. Teachers who did not complete their post graduate and teachers who already completed their post graduate show same results. Therefore, teachers are capable to employ storytelling in their teaching style regardless of their current degree. The results of this study encourage other teachers from different spatialization and cities to apply this technique. Moreover, storytelling is a simple technique which can be used and employed at any level or time.

Table (7) shows the teaching experience variable:

Domains	Variations	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Strategy	Between Groups	0.34	2	0.17	1.59	0.21
	Within Groups	14.28	133	0.11		
	Total	14.62	135			
Teachers	Between Groups	0.19	2	0.10	1.73	0.49
	Within Groups	17.36	133	0.13		
	Total	17.55	135			
Engagement	Between Groups	0.28	2	0.14	0.67	
	Within Groups	27.37	133	0.21		

	Total	27.64	135			0.51
Total	Between Groups	0.08	2	0.04	0.49	0.61
	Within Groups	11.24	133	0.08		
	Total	11.32	135			

From the above table (7), the results state there are no statistical differences at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) due to the total score of the experience variable. This is to say, new English teachers are capable of employing storytelling in their teaching style. As the authors argued elsewhere above, long experienced teachers can use this technique but these results prove that recently employed teachers can implement storytelling too. The authors encourage other newly teachers to use this technique in their teaching style. New English teachers who are a bit confused about which technique to include in the learning process can rely on storytelling as a successful technique. Results also showed that students became more interested in the subject because fairytales are employed rather than traditional teaching.

Table (8) shows the gender variable:

Domains	Variations	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Strategy	Between Groups	0.34	2	0.17	1.59	0.21
	Within Groups	14.28	133	0.11		
	Total	14.62	135			
Teachers	Between Groups	0.19	2	0.10	1.73	0.49
	Within Groups	17.36	133	0.13		
	Total	17.55	135			
Engagement	Between Groups	0.28	2	0.14	0.67	0.51
	Within Groups	27.37	133	0.21		
	Total	27.64	135			
Total	Between Groups	0.08	2	0.04	0.49	0.61
	Within Groups	11.24	133	0.08		
	Total	11.32	135			

From the above table, it is concluded that there are no statistical differences at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) due to the total score of the gender variable. Teachers from both genders can use storytelling techniques in their teaching style. Although fairytales and reciting stories are usually related female teachers as a stereotype, especially to students in primary levels, yet this study found that both genders are able and hold ability to tell stories for their students. A qualified teacher can implement this technique to develop their students' level. The authors encourage teachers from both genders to use storytelling because students tend to listen to stories. It is also clear that

### Discussion

This section summarizes the findings and contributions made between this study and previously published work. The results demonstrated in this chapter match state of the art methods in the literature. Here, we compare the study's results with those in the literature. These results have led to high levels of agreement of the study of Green (2004). Items related to the positive effect that teachers noticed on their students after

four weeks of using storytelling strategy in their classrooms received a high level of agreement from respondents. Also, the item related to using activities that familiarize students with using their imagination to solve problems. Furthermore, items with a modest level of agreement among the study population were related, according to the findings. The results of this method are in agreement with the expectations of Jauvin (2019). On the other hand, some teachers thought that using narrative in the classroom was insufficient. The findings also revealed that the items with the lowest were related to topics such as having regular conversations with students' parents, sharing teachers' experiences with colleagues, and informing the principal and supervisor about the effects of using storytelling. Thus, based on this assumption, the storytelling method can be applied in the classroom by teachers. This goes in line with Phillips (2000). The authors also found that imagination is a powerful and underutilized tool for learning and that it should be incorporated into the Palestinian curriculum and content as a primary teaching technique. Even though we did not replicate the previously reported by Egan (1986), our results suggest that storytelling is a powerful tool to enlarge student imagination attractively. The authors agree with Young & Annisette (2007) state that imagination allows students to investigate their world and the world around them in a variety of ways. When comparing the results of this study to those of other studies, it could be pointed out that this study demonstrated how students' imaginations grew more fertile, and how they learned to rely on their imaginations to think freely and generate innovative ideas. This is an important finding in the understanding of the storytelling as mentioned earlier in the literature review by Parkinson (2010). Storytelling can be an aid to a variety of skills for students. The results also found that the tendency to utilize storytelling was influenced by the gender of the respondents, with the results favoring females. It was unaffected by the respondents' age or previous teaching experience. It leads to good results, even if the improvement is negligible. All in all, the results of this study can be summarized into the following:

- Storytelling technique is effective when it is implanted for a long time. Teachers should not give up on using this technique if students do not show good results. Thus, the teacher should expect results on the long run not the short run.
- Storytelling technique helps students to produce better English. The results of the study showed that students were able to enhance their English skills, especially writing, when storytelling is employed. Learning English might be a hindrance for some students yet storytelling can be an additional learning method that suit students.
- Storytelling technique is a powerful tool to unleash creative ideas while writing. Storytelling proved itself worthy as a good source of imagination. Students start extending their writing events due to the influence of storytelling technique.
- Storytelling technique helps student to be independent thinkers. Students depend on themselves to solve their problems rather than asking help from others. Students answer their own question from their own imagination. In other words, a story creates questions and those questions require answers which leads in creative thoughts and ideas.
- Storytelling technique is mostly used by female teachers. Females are more likely to use this technique in comparison with male teacher who do not prefer much this kind of techniques. Although male teachers are using it to some extent but it is still into a limited use.
- There is a direct relationship between storytelling technique and students' motivation. The results show that students become more interested in the class because they consider storytelling is a kind of entertainment. Therefore, students' motivation escalating significantly from teachers' perspectives.

#### **Limitations of the study**

This study has been implanted during the second semester of 2020-2021 at Al Zahrah Elementary Girls' School and Al-Karama Elementary Boys' School in Jenin City, Palestine. The study covered (20) English teachers from both genders. It investigated their perceptions on using the storytelling technique to develop students' imagination through storytelling. Although the results are, generally speaking, accepted, it suffers from some limitations due to the number of English teachers who participated in the study; thus, the results cannot be overgeneralized in while country or other levels.

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## Conclusion

This study aimed at understanding teachers' perspectives on developing students' imagination through storytelling technique. First of all, the authors identified few teachers' variable and analyzed them for a deeper understanding of this topic. The authors faced some problems while collecting the data because not all English teachers have enough free time during the school day to answer the questions of the questionnaire. The

A central goal for this study was to prove the effectiveness of storytelling in teaching English as a foreign language in Palestine. As a final note, improving students' imaginations can help them achieve a variety of educational goals and develop abilities such as speaking, writing, and listening. As a result, teachers are highly recommended to employ storytelling as a tool to help students develop their imagination.

## Recommendations

The authors encourage teachers to incorporate narrative into their lesson plans and avoid using monotonous, ineffectual tactics as much as possible. In addition, the Palestinian Ministry of Education should integrate storytelling into its curriculum and give schools the required technology to use it effectively such as projectors and laptops. Recently employed teachers are encouraged to use storytelling in their classrooms. Moreover, principals, English language supervisors, and experienced teachers should assist and support other teachers who desire to use storytelling to expand their students' imaginations. In essence, recently employed teachers, stakeholders, curricula designers should examine the results of employing storytelling from different published studies. Other research should consider conducting an experiment study between two groups to pinpoint the effectiveness of storytelling on students' imagination.

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## Conflict of Interest

Authors submitting this manuscript have claimed that they do not have a conflict of interest among themselves.

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### Appendix

#### Questionnaire

Dear Teachers

The questionnaire was designed to investigate **Teachers' Perspectives on Developing Primary Students' Imagination through Storytelling technique in Palestine**

Read all the questions carefully and then tick the correct option which you consider. Your answer will be confidential and will only be used for research purposes

Thank you for your cooperation.

#### Section (1): Personal Information

- 1) Gender : Male  Female
- 2) Qualification: B.A.  M.A.
- 3) Experience: 01-05  06-10

**Section (2): Read the following statements carefully and check under the column that best represent your level of agreement with each statement**

No.	Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Teacher employs stories in improving the students behavior and results					
2.	Prior preparing teacher helps in employing stories in the students behavior and results					

3.	Curricula information makes English language teacher unable to practice .So, it has negative effects on students' achievement					
4.	The teacher doesn't need training sessions in employing stories					
5.	Crowded curriculum obstacles teacher from employing stories in teaching					
6.	Palestinian curriculum includes environmental resources help employing stories in teaching					
7.	The curriculum considers the individual differences when employing stories					
8.	Employing telling stories in teaching fifth and sixth grades reinforces both students' and teacher's confidence					
9.	Employing stories in curriculum makes the teacher able to use new methods					
10.	Employing stories helps in affecting the students behavior					
11.	Employing stories in teaching fifth and sixth grade helps in students' losing attention					
12.	Integrating stories telling in fifth and sixth grade curriculum helps students identifying the other cultures					
13.	There are theaters and laps helping in employing stories telling					
14.	Parents contribute in supporting employing stories in improving the behavior					
15.	School helps employing stories in the curriculum					
16.	School management considers employing stories in improving behavior for fifth and sixth grade					

#### Biodata

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