AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IN BUSINESS EDUCATION THROUGH STORY TELLING

Dr. Rajdeep K. Manwani
Professor & Head Academic Research
Sindhi College, Bengaluru

Dr. Guruprasad B.G, Mr. Vainik V S
Assistant Professor
School of Commerce, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University), Bengaluru.

Abstract: **Formal and online education has come a long way and with changing times, new methods of teaching are being developed according to the need of the subject and the needs of the students. However certain age-old methods retain their charm with changing times and only emerge stronger. One such method is story telling.**

The purpose of this research paper is to work out how educators, students et al. round the world are using storytelling to support the digital educational process. This study provides a general framework about educational uses of storytelling in several subjects and describes the various perceptions of individuals in understanding storytelling. A survey was used to collect responses from a group of educators, students and others in educational settings to determine how they are using storytelling for online educational purposes. The results show the current situation of educational uses of storytelling and explore some of the benefits and challenges educators face in implementing storytelling in their institutions and teaching online classes.

The paper also attempts to give solutions in bridge the digital divide through engaging storytelling.

The research paper also explores reasons for storytelling's current popularity as a teaching and learning tool, then suggests how educators and students can work together to create a storytelling culture. To conclude, benefits for college kids who learn through storytelling are outlined.

Key words: **Higher education, storytelling, student attention span, redefining teaching creativity**

I. INTRODUCTION:

"A story is different. It does not expend itself. It preserves and concentrates its strength and is capable of releasing it even after a long time" - Walter Benjamin (1973)

"Stories derive their power through weaving images, music, narrative, and voice together, thereby giving deep dimension and vivid color to characters, situations, and insights."

This directed instruction model has its foundations embedded in the behavioral learning perspective (Skinner, 1938) and it is a popular technique, which has been used for decades as an educational strategy in all institutions of learning. Basically, the teacher controls the instructional process, the content is delivered to the entire class and the teacher tends to emphasize factual knowledge. In other words, the teacher delivers the lecture content, and the students listen to the lecture. Thus, the learning mode tends to be passive and the learners play little part in their learning process (Orlich et al.,1998). It has been found in most universities by many teachers and students that the conventional lecture approach in classroom is of limited effectiveness in both teaching and learning. In such a lecture students assume a purely passive role and their concentration fades off after 15-20 minutes[1].

For thousands of years societies have taught key principles through storytelling (Brady,1997; MacDonald, 1998). In some cultures, without written language, storytelling was the only way to convey a society's culture, values, and history (Egan, 1989). Great leaders of all types (e.g., religious, political, educational, and military) have used stories as instructional tools in the form of parables, legends, myths, fables, and real-life examples to convey important information (Benedict, 1934; Brown &Duguid, 1998; Davenport &Prusak, 1998; Leonard-Barton, 1995). Fictional and nonfictional examples have always been powerful teaching tools. Storytelling as an information medium is heavily used today in education and training of all types. We see evidence of this in dentistry (Whipp, Ferguson, Wells &Iacopino, 2000), the military (Cianciolo, Prevou, Cianciolo& Morris, 2007), aviation (Cohn,1994), general medicine (Churchill & Churchill, 1989), law (Dorf, 2004; Rhode &Luban,2005), and business (Ellet, 2007;

Forbes Magazine Staff & Gross, 1997). These are just a few groups which rely heavily on storytelling as a method for teaching key principles of their discipline, and to help build analytical prowess in students and trainees[2].

The Storytelling Association (2002) elaborates on storytelling as "… the modern expression of the ancient art of telling legends… using media to create media-rich stories to tell, to share, and to preserve.

Story telling is probably the most appreciated part of childhood memories and experiences in an individual's life. Some stories are created while some are borrowed from real life experiences. Stories have the potential to celebrate life and learn about it, in its various aspects. As children, parents and teachers give values, lessons etc. in the form of stories. Thus, the teaching potential held in the idea of storytelling has been witnessed for generations and commended through civilizations.

There are many definitions of storytelling, but in general terms, storytelling is defined as telling stories and sharing information with tools and resources. In a famous book by Oller Storytelling in the Classroom, the author describes storytelling as a creative process in which a traditional story is combined with personal experiences, such as an insight, an inspiration, and relevant memories.

The power and potential of storytelling is seen in our culture and the Panchatantra, stands testimony to this fact, which is an ancient Indian inter-related collection of animal fables in verse and prose, in a frame story format. These stories are supposed to have turned around dull heads to capable administrators branded as geniuses by the then society.

Such an age-old habit has not received enough attention in the form of a teaching tool in higher education and the reasons are multi-fold. In certain behaviour-based subjects like Organisationalbehaviour, Consumer behaviour etc., relating concepts to stories and taking the same to the classroom works effectively. However, when it comes to subjects like financial management, financial accounting etc., the concept of storytelling has taken a back seat. The question to be explored is: Can story telling work in such subjects? The answer is YES.

Commerce has heterogenic pattern of subjects and the range witnessed in the UG program in general is wide enough for the pupil to question. The bigger range causes a disconnection in the learning process. Certain subjects are introduced only in final year B' Com. The strength of storytelling in its various aspects works to be all pervasive and fits itself into diverse range of subjects.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sherwood proposed that students who use storytelling for evaluation help to facilitate this. Adding to previous research that shows the benefit and challenges of gathering qualitative feedback, stories written by 47 Childhood Studies undergraduate students while at university in England explain their learning experiences. Analysis of the content of their stories identified what their learning journey had been like providing useful information to shape teaching and support their wellbeing; both important measures for universities because they are factors that influence retention and the number of applicants to their institution. The research concludes that stories written by students are useful because they enable the HE teacher to engage in new ways of listening and responding to personal accounts that communicate what the learning experience is like for students and what is important to them.

Devinder Thapa (2018) initiated o bridge the digital divide, such as One Laptop per Child (OLPC), has been criticized for not taking a holistic approach that has led to limited success in providing quality education in developing countries. Particular emphasis is placed on examining the context in Information and communication technology for development (ICTD) initiatives. In this paper, we applied the theoretical lens of information ecology to conceptualize context to conduct a case study of Open Learning Exchange Nepal, which has been described as one of the few successes in implementing OLPC. Our findings show that it is not the technology per se (OLPC in this case), but its ecosystem that brought quality education in schools of remote mountain regions of Nepal.

Duncan, Michael et al., examined the effect of a six-week combined movement and story-telling intervention on motor competence and naming vocabulary in British preschoolers. Using a cluster randomized design, three pre-school classes were allocated to one of a combined movement and story-telling intervention (n = 22), or a movement only (n = 25) or storytelling only (n = 27) intervention. Motor competence and language ability were assessed pre, post and eight weeks post intervention. Results from repeated measures ANOVA indicated significantly greater improvement in both motor competence and language ability pre to post intervention for the combined movement and story-telling group compared to the movement only or storytelling only groups. However, for the period post intervention to eight weeks post intervention the magnitude of change for motor competence and language ability was significant for all groups and similar in magnitude. The results of this study demonstrate the efficacy of combining movement and storytelling, over movement or storytelling alone, to benefit both motor competence and language ability in preschoolers. Combining both movement and storytelling appears to offer synergistic benefits in relation to physical and communication development, which are critical for good development in the early years.

Stevenson, et al., described that story can be used to share diverse experiences and build cultural understanding. It is developed from a case study of a module which teaches and

practices story-making and storytelling to develop cross-cultural communication and understanding. The paper illustrates a staged process of teaching and learning through stories, reflecting upon our experience at each stage. It explores our role as storytellers as we engage in a field trip in Indonesia and use stories of our own lives to develop communication with our hosts, encouraging interaction and dialogue about the commonalities and differences in our lives. Our personal journeys are captured in daily journals and a post trip reflection which are used to explore our experience and learning. The paper highlights the contribution of stories to the development of multi-cultural literacy, cross-cultural communication and critical reflexivity.

Kyratzis, commented on a long-term program of research examining conversational personal story-telling practices in two working-class communities. The focus on the two communities was useful. Personal storytelling in these communities is "highly valued and avidly practiced," and children grow up with conversational narratives told around them by adults and older children all the time. The overall research program has made significant contributions to our understanding of language and culture, and of how beliefs and values are passed on to children through language practices. Moreover, there are very few studies of the influence of social class on the socialization and development of children in the United States, where socioeconomic status is so often conflated with culture and ethnicity. The research program of Miller et al. has contributed significantly to this area of knowledge. In my comments, I first point to ways in which the research of Miller et al. on culture and communicative practice contributes to our understanding of development. Next, I synthesize the important educational implications raised by the study, particularly in terms of inter-group classroom communication, and point out some questions it raises for future research. Finally, I pose a question about the extent to which children's and adults' narrative practices are active choices for presenting the self rather than ways of "seeing the world" imposed by the culture.

1.Sherwood, Gina (2020), "Am I missing something by not using story-telling? Why we should ask university students to use storytelling to evaluate their experiences of learning", Teaching in Higher Education. Apr2020, Vol. 25 Issue 3, p321-333. 13p

III.   RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1. Objectives of the study:

a. To understand if storytelling is a creative and superior teaching method in online higher education
b. To explore if faculty members/students accept and appreciate such an idea in digital higher education

c. To explore if storytelling has higher retention value and has the ability to simplify the learning process

3.2. Scope of the Study: The scope of the study is limited to the objectives mentioned above.

3.3. Hypothesis:

Null hypothesis: Story telling is not a creative/superior method of teaching
Alternate hypothesis: Story telling is a creative/superior method of teaching

3.4. Limitations of the Study:

a. The findings and suggestions are limited by the opinions and knowledge of the respondents.
b. The respondents are limited to the city of Bengaluru, Karnataka.
c. An interpretation of this study assumes that the respondents have provided true and correct information.
d. The present research study covers only those respondents who consented to our request to be a part of this research.
e. This study is limited to Commerce stream of higher education in the present scenario.
f. The study has limitations w r t time, place and resources

3.5. Methodology:

(a) Type of research: Both, field research and library research were undertaken. The objectives were first analysed through field research and then elaborated through library research.

(b) Research Tool: Questionnaire – a **structured interview schedule** was drafted, keeping in mind the objectives of the study as listed above and circulated digitally through electronic mail.

(c) Sample Design:

i. Random sampling method is adopted for the study. Here, the sample units are chosen primarily based on the convenience of the investigator and willingness of the respondents to participate in the study undertaken.
ii. The study is relevant to all students and teachers in the higher education level. Such students and teachers are spread across the length and breadth of the country. As the population size is huge and has heterogeneous features, random sampling method had to be resorted to.
iii. The sample size of thirty-five respondents who consented for the study were picked from diversified backgrounds.
iv. This is one of the non-probability methods of sampling

(d) Profiles of the respondents:

i.   A sample size of **thirty-five** was chosen to conduct the survey.

ii.   The age group of the respondents is 18 years and above.

iii.   Questions were framed to understand their awareness level etc. as listed in the objectives.

iv.   Men and women respondents were included randomly without preference to either one of them.

v.   The personal background and belief system of the respondents was not taken as a criteria in this study

vi.   The IQ levels of the respondents and their stream of education was also not taken as a criteria

vii. As the subject is relevant to all those parts of the teaching industry, the student community and the teaching community were preferred for the study.

(e) Collecting data:

i.   Each respondent was asked to answer the questions in the same order as in the questionnaire. Initially, rapport was established with the respondent, and he/she was made aware that they were part of research work and his/her co-operation to the fullest extent would make the research meaningful.

ii.   The respondent was asked to give his/her opinion freely. Any doubts raised by the respondents were clarified to gain honest answers.

iii.   In certain cases, the questionnaire was translated into the vernacular languages so as to facilitate right understanding of the concept.

iv.   Apart from the interview method, survey method, observation methods and experiences have been employed to collect and analyse data.

(f) Method of analysis:

i.   Statistical methods were used, and the data is presented in the form of charts and tables.

ii.   MS word, Excel and Power point applications have been used to tabulate and present the data.

iii.   Descriptive analysis is the method employed to present data

IV.   FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION:

The primary data reveals the following:

i.   All the teacher respondents, except one, agreed that they are well aware of the idea of storytelling, regardless of their background.

ii.   75% of the respondents said they have experienced story telling as a method of teaching at school/home/college; while the remaining disagreed to the same.
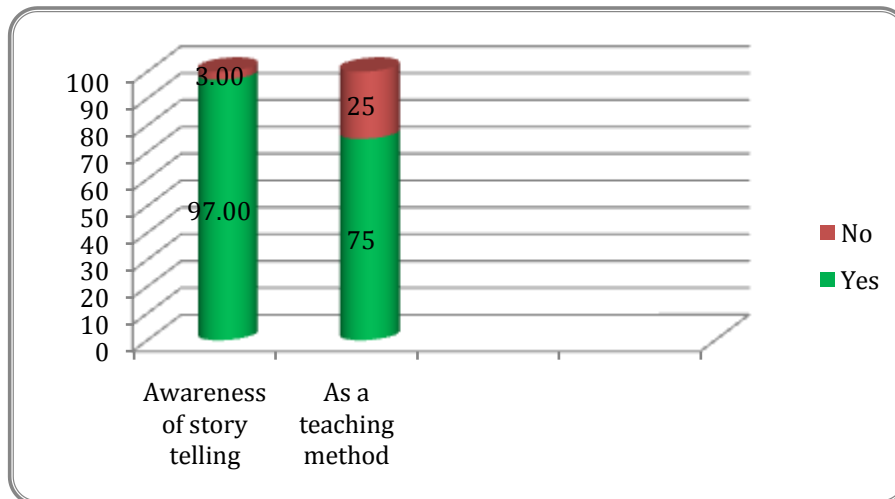
3. When asked to state their best experiences in this regard, the following was revealed:

a.   Once I told a story regarding the pre-preparation in the class and the next day students came prepared.

b.   My statistics professor took real life stories and connected it to statistics. This made it very interesting.

c.   Learnt it from my mother in childhood and now I occasionally use story telling it the classroom

d.   Eagerness of students to know what next, pin drop silence in the class; enacting or parallel role playing as the story is being told through ppt.

e.   Thematic stories and truth related ones are the best

f.   A story about entrepreneurship was used in the class

g.   In languages it works well

h.   There are too many experiences to make a mention, and all are wonderful learning episodes and stories. They make it easy to remember.

i.   In subjects like International Business and HRM, it works well

j.   I have experienced tis in my college while doing UG and PG under Indian Economics and Environmental Development.
k.   Business Law case studies and cases in college subjects.
l.   In auditing, Satyam fiasco helped students understand about the importance of the concept.
m.   Edison's failure during making the light bulb and his interpretation after it.
n.   Giving real time examples of companies, in marketing; examples of difficulties faced by different people while working as an HR Manager in MNCs.

o.   In Finance, Infosys – Insider trading

4. Story telling is a dynamic concept that has emerged in different forms in different cultures. Its' aspects are endearing and high reaching according to the ancient works recorded. People from different civilizations have celebrated this lively idea and tried giving real feel by enacting or adding music and dance, etc. Therefore, the study tried the exploring if storytelling promotes the following:

Particulars	Yes	No
a. Understand the concept better	30	0
b. Retention value	30	0
c. Simplification of concept	29	1
d. Develop interest towards the concept	30	0
e. Take importance away from the concept	4	26
f. Simplify classroom management	28	2
g. Reflective skills of the student	28	2
h. Writing skills	20	10
i. Ability to answer better	27	3
j. Presentation skills	27	3
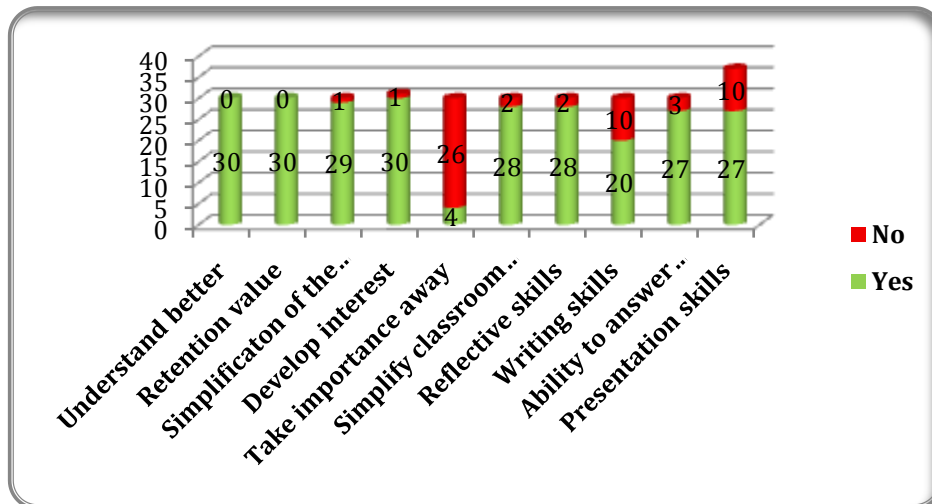
Bar graph showing the various aspects of storytelling favoured by the respondents

The above table and graph reveal that story telling is a much-favoured tool in higher education and it brings out a certain amount of happiness in telling it as well as listening to it.

5. On a scale of 1 – 5, one being strongly disagree and five being strongly agree, respondents were asked to rate the following aspects of storytelling:
a. improves the context of the subject taught
b. converts to the construction of the knowledge

c.   increases the student participation in the class
d.   improves the chances of collaborative projects among students and teachers

The results may be shown as follows:
✓   20 out of 30 respondents rated 4 and above to opine that they either agree or strongly agree that story telling improves the context of the subject taught.

✓ 25 out of 30 respondents rated 4 and above to opine that they either agree or strongly agree that story telling converts to the construction of the knowledge.

✓ 27 out of 30 respondents rated 4 and above to opine that they either agree or strongly agree that story telling increases the student participation in the class

✓ 20 out of 30 respondents rated 4 and above to opine that they either agree or strongly agree that story telling improves the chances of collaborative projects among students and teachers

This question further explores the creative elements and its benefits to different aspects of teaching such as the teacher, the student community, the learning environment and harmonious attitude towards the subject and the teacher from the student point of view, etc.

**6.** When asked to mention which subjects fit best for storytelling, the following was found:
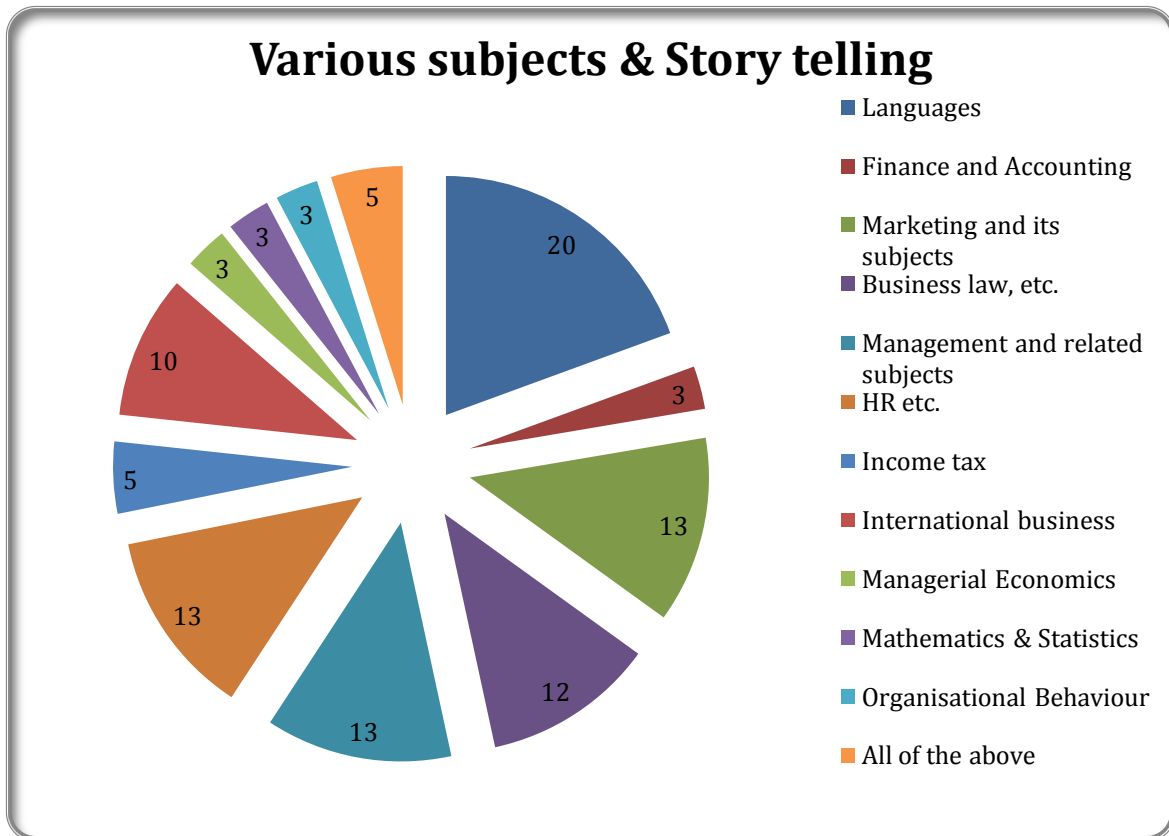
Pie-Chart showing the opinions of the respondents as to where storytelling be used as a teaching method among commerce subjects

7. When asked to quote the best subjects where story telling may be accommodated, all subjects got some attention and very few opined that it is a best fit in all the subjects.

8. When asked at what part of the teaching process does story telling come out to be most effective; respondents stated the following:

Story telling in Teaching process
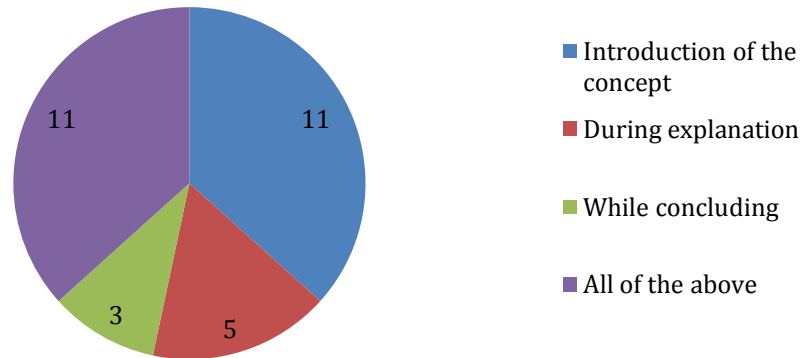
Pie-Chart showing how story telling can contribute at various stages of the teaching process

9. When asked to state any relevant detail about the concept under study, the following was revealed:

a. A video presentation of the story, such as animation will help a lot.
b. Story telling is one of the tools; but it is not the only tool
c. It is good to use story telling as it is effective and breaks the complexity in the subject.
d. Story works, as a better tool for explaining concepts as it comprises of the narrative mode.

4.1. Statistical Analysis Result:

Large Sample testing was applied, and the null hypothesis is rejected as the following was found.

At 5% level of significance, it was found that story telling is actually an effective tool and method of teaching that promotes the various skills as listed below
a. Understand the concept better
b. Retention value

c. Simplification of concept

d. Develop interest towards the concept
e. Does not take importance away from the concept

f. Simplify classroom management
g. Reflective skills of the student
h. Writing skills
i. Ability to answer better
j. Presentation skills

Hence the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

V.   SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION:

The study makes the following suggestions:

1. In the context of higher education, storytelling may be used as often as possible for the inherent benefits it holds.
2. The teaching community must take the effort to deliberately include this method among the various method available for teaching in Commerce and Management. Such a method may be graciously mixed with other efficient methods to use in the right amount.
3. The creativity of storytelling can be extended to any subject. This sheds the complexity of the subject/concept. Hence, it may be recommended to conduct a workshop for faculty members to help them understand its creative nuances and make use of the same.
4. A data bank may be constructed to compile such effective stories and experiences in different subjects. This will not act as a document for future reference, but also helps sharing of the same among the faculty members to pass on the benefit.
5. Technology enhanced teaching methods can easily embrace story telling. This is proved by the competent use of this ides by websites like Investopedia to explain financial terms to the common man through animated episodes. Transferring such methods to the classroom occasionally can yield rich benefits.

To conclude, storytelling is a much-favoured method and employing the same in higher education as well can be considered to be effective use of creative teaching methods.

VI.   REFERENCES:

[1]. Devinder Thapa &Maung K. Sein (2018), "An ecological model of bridging the digital divide in education: A case study of OLPC deployment in Nepal", Wiley, https://doi.org/10.1002/isd2.12018

[2]. Duncan, Michael, Cunningham, Anna, Eyre, Emma (2019), A combined movement and story-telling intervention enhances motor competence and language ability in preschoolers to a greater extent than movement or storytelling alone, European Physical Education Review. Feb2019, Vol. 25 Issue 1, p221-235. 15p.

[3]. Stevenson, Nancy (2019), Developing cultural understanding through story-telling Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism. Jan-Mar2019, Vol. 19 Issue 1, p8-21. 14p.

[4]. Kyratzis, Amy (2005), Language and Culture: Socialization through Personal Story-Telling Practice, Human Development (0018716X). May2005, Vol. 48 Issue 3, p146-150. 5p.

[5]. Warren-Gordon (2020), "The Power of Story Telling Building Trust and Connections Between Community Members and Police", Liberal Education. Fall2020, Vol. 106 Issue 3, p47-51. 5p.

Electronic References:

[1]. Dr. Damodharan V S. ACCA, AICWA and Mr. RengarajanVAICWA.Retrieved from: *http://math.arizona.edu/~atpmena/conference/proceedings/Damodharan_Innovative_Methods.pdf*

[2]. Dee Andrews, Thomas hull and Jennifer Donahue. August 31, 2009. Retrieved from:http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/afrl/storytelling_instructional.pdf

[3]. Retrieved from:http://www.indianhindunames.com/panchatantra-stories.htm