

## TEACHER'S PERCEPTION: TEACHING READING STORYBOARD FOR MENTALLY RETARDED STUDENTS

by:

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### Abstract

There is evidence of the benefits of using storyboards. Most of the previous studies focused on the results of applying storyboards for students' achievement, however, there are limited empirical studies on teacher's perceptions of the application of storyboards in teaching reading for students with special needs, especially mild-mentally retarded students. This study offers a qualitative research that aims to investigate teachers' perceptions of the use of storyboards in teaching reading and its benefits and challenges with two English teachers as the subjects. A semi-structured interview was conducted to collect the data. The findings of this study revealed that there were similarities in teacher's perception and the benefits derived from the implementation of storyboard, but there were differences in their practice and challenges encountered in the teaching reading process to mild-mentally retarded students.

**Keywords:** Teacher's Perception, Storyboard, Teaching Reading, Mentally Retarded Students

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is considered as an important skill in teaching English in which an interactive process occurs between the reader and the text. It is basically involved a cognitive process that readers interrelate with the written text in order to they capture idea, construct meaning and comprehend the content (Harmer,2007; Rathert, 2012; Kalayci&Humiston, 2015).

Academically, reading is also taught for mentally retarded students. They are defined as children with mild mental retardation, who have below average in intellectual function and adaptive behavior, which ranges between 50-55 to 70-75,categorized as educable level (Vig&Jedrysek, 2004; Alqahtani, 2013). Intellectual function means an ability to learn, memorize, solve problems, and state opinions. Meanwhile, an ability to live independently is a form of adaptive behavior.

Teaching reading for mild-mentally retarded students is not easy compared to normal students. This is due to their lack of concentration in the learning process. Mild-mentally retarded students can read and understand a text with the average of ten lines or no more than 100 words that is followed by inferential and literal questions (Lundberg &Reichenberg, 2013; Fajardo, 2014). In this case, special consideration is required to teach reading for the students.

Storyboard can be used as a therapeutic reading for mild-mentally retarded students that is effective to aid students visualize the text with the aid of pictures and words. Nowadays, apart from being made on paper, storyboards can also be made on the website. Everyone is able to design the story with the

help of the features contained in the online storyboard. It is supported by Essley&Rocci (2008), storyboard facilitates a sequencing story containing word/sentences and pictures.

Students can remember and understand text with the help of storyboard since they will think in pictures or can be referred to mental imagery (Clark, et.al, 2014). Moreover, stories provide opportunities for students to develop their mental abilities by recalling, imagining and thinking, as well as language skills (Ghanayem, 2016; Al-Shablawi, 2017).

The storyboard method can be used as a teaching method to ease students in the learning process since it pays attention to audiovisual and uses more than one sense. Regarding to the characteristics of mild-mentally retarded students, storyboard is able to develop thinking skill and imagination skill. Another important thing is that it can minimize boredom in students' learning to read (Carbo, 2013; Mansi, 2015). As for the content of the storyboard to mild-mentally retarded students, it must use simple language (specific content) and be presented attractively in real situations (Al-Shablawi, 2017).

Reviewing previous study showed positive impact to the use of storyboard in teaching reading for high school students was conducted by Hidayanti,et.al (2020). Another research also demonstrated positive findings of teaching reading storyboard on the points of phonological awareness or second-fourth grade as the subjects (Bably&Awwad, 2010; Al-Juhani, 2015).

The storyboard method involved the process of connecting the meaning and emotion of words which can develop students' reading skill. The result

of this study was carried out by Mokhtar, et.al (2010). Another research was conducted by Bruce (2011) that storyboard facilitated students to think about how they understand a story from picture frames which will improve their brainstorming skill.

Some previous studies focused on storyboard to improve reading skill for students with special needs offered by Naar (2013), Abuzaid & Al Kayed (2020). Naar (2013) utilized storyboard to enhance reading comprehension of English novels to six students with limited abilities. This study revealed positive impact that students with limited-English proficiency got enhancement on their reading skill.

Meanwhile, Abuzaid & Al Kayed (2020) identified the impact of applying storyboard to enhance reading Arabic language of learners with reading disabilities. The findings mentioned that students could differentiate Arabic letters that were similar in written but were pronounced differently with the aid of the storyboard.

Regarding those previous studies, research that focuses on teacher's perception of the use of reading storyboard is still lack of concern. Not only perception, but also the benefits and the barriers during teaching process are required to be paid attention. Moreover, the researcher did not discover any study focuses on the subject of mild-mentally retarded students. In that case, this paper tries to find out how English teachers' knowledge about the use of storyboard in their perception and teaching reading process by covering research questions: 1). How do the teachers perceive and experience in teaching reading storyboard for mild-mentally retarded students? 2). What are the benefits of teaching reading story board for mild-mentally retarded students? 3). What are the challenges teaching reading story board for mild-mentally retarded students?

## 2. METHOD

This study used a qualitative research. It examines phenomena that aim to report an overview of the results of the information obtained and in-depth understanding which is described in the narrative form.

The subject of this study involved two English teachers who teach English for mild-mentally retarded students in a special education. They were called as T1 and T2 who chosen with some reasons. First, they applied storyboard in teaching reading. Second, they teach in different level. The first teacher taught the eighth grade mild-mentally retarded students while the second teacher taught the tenth grade.

This study conducted a semi-structured interview to collect the data related to teacher's perception and experiences in applying storyboard to teach reading for mild-mentally retarded students as well as to find out its benefits and challenges from its implementation. Ary, et.al (2010) mentioned that an

interview was used to gain data related to people's feeling, believes, and opinions as well as to understand experiences in certain situations or phenomena.

The interview was audio-recorded by spending 35-40 minutes based on teachers' willing. The researcher did a transcription from data obtained. The transcription process means an altering process of audio-recording into text data, then it was displayed in the narrative form related to the result of research questions.

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### a) How do the teachers apprehend and experience in teaching reading storyboard for mild-mentally retarded students?

The two teachers had similar perceptions regarding to the implementation of the storyboard to teach reading skill. It can be described as follows:

T1: *In my point of view, storyboard is an interactive media to engage students in learning, especially mild-mentally retarded students. They enjoy to learn with pictures and storyboard answers it. I got this knowledge from the discussion with my lecturer and other classmates when I was in university. Then, I apply it to teach reading to my students. Not only used to normal students, but also it can be used to mild-mentally retarded students.*

T2: *I perceive that storyboard is known as sketch that has sequence pictures into a story. Actually, I know it by watching a video on YouTube. I sometimes use it to teach reading for students, but it is little bit hard to do.*

The data obtained from the interview find out the two teachers' similarity perceptions of storyboard but they had different experience. The first teacher benefited and enjoyed the experience in applying storyboard in teaching and learning process, in particular reading skill. It is shown that storyboard was considered as an interactive media containing picture series to motivate students in learning.

Interestingly, the knowledge about storyboard was obtained from studying and discussing with lecturers and classmates at the university previously. As a result, she was interested in implementing it to the reading learning process for mild-mentally retarded students. T1 also considered that storyboard could be used for all students' level, both normal students and students' with special needs.

T1's findings were supported by Hasan & Wijaya (2016), storyboard is one of techniques to motivate students and made students interested in teaching and learning process. Kanaanah (2013) also supported that storyboard can motivate students to learn reading by grouping words in order to gain meaningful story.

Furthermore, the second teacher expressed her perception of the storyboard which has a series of pictures to create a story in chronological order. In

addition, T2 acknowledged the idea of the storyboard from videos that were posted on YouTube. Even so, T2 did not often implement storyboard for teaching reading because it was not easy for mild-mentally retarded students.

Those statements can be interpreted that the second teacher had limited experience related to the storyboard implementation in teaching reading. It is not line with the result of the study conducted by Rahiemie&Donyaie (2015), they stated that mild-mentally retarded students were able to outperform their memory skill with a collection of pictures represented by storyboard.

**b) What are the benefits of teaching reading storyboard for mild-mentally retarded students?**

Both teachers mentioned benefits during the application of teaching reading storyboard, it can be indicated below:

T1: *Storyboard helps me to teach students because it can attract their motivation in learning process with the aid of the pictures contained. Moreover, students can understand the story better than without storyboard. Sometimes, I can set the sentence length to be adjustable with students' character which ease them to read.*

T2: *Although I rarely use storyboard, but I think it can be used as a brainstorming to build their background knowledge on the topic being studied. In addition, variety of images displayed can help the development of students' character. They sometimes can pronounce words correctly when repeating me in reading the text. However, it can also be an obstacle for me that not all students can follow me well.*

The excerpt above explained the benefits of the teaching reading storyboard that offered by both teachers. The first teacher gained the advantage of having a storyboard because it simplified her to teach reading to the students. They were also motivated in the learning process. This idea was supported by Rahmi&Mahyuddin (2020), the story columns on the storyboard can increase both students' interest and satisfaction with the images contained in the story.

In addition, the teacher can also adjust the sentences length of the reading on storyboard because mild-mentally retarded students cannot read long texts. Fajardo (2014) mentioned that students with mid-mental retardation can read the text consisting of ten sentences or 100 words. Meanwhile, T2 expressed her thought that storyboard was able to build knowledge and develop students' character. Besides, mild-mentally retarded students were able to imitate what the teacher said. Although, not all students followed her well.

It is in line with Rahmi&Mahyuddin (2020), storyboard was known as a teaching technique to create a variety of images in order to develop

students' character. Thus, storyboard became more fun and could be applied offline. Pictures, visuals, and concrete objects were more useful than a thousand words, even to represent action, emotion, and the detailed information. Moreover, it assisted students to think creatively by framing the images which be able to improve their brainstorming skill.

**c) What are the challenges that teachers face when teaching reading storyboard for mild-mentally retarded students?**

Both teachers revealed the challenges they had during teaching and learning process. The idea can be interpreted as follows:

T1: *Though, storyboard is effective to be implemented, but I need to provide glossaries to help students understand the content. Even, I require extra guidance to maintain students' attention.*

T2: *Although, the teaching process uses storyboard but maintaining students' attention in learning reading is my challenge. Also, they have lack of vocabularies which it does not positively affect students' reading comprehension. I realize the case is my duty to motivate students in learning process and emphasize more on the storyboard application.*

Both teachers have similar challenge regarding to mild-mentally retarded students' characteristic. They have lack of concentration span that influenced their attention. Mild-mentally retarded students experienced a slow process of motor development and concentration (Erim&Caferoglu, 2017). Even, the second teacher explained that sometimes students' reading comprehension did not improve positively through storyboard. The idea is not in line with the result of Naara (2013), reading comprehension increased positively with the storyboard implementation on students with limited proficiency.

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study expressed two English teachers' perception of teaching reading storyboard which were affected by degree experience and another source. The first teacher possessed the understanding of storyboard and experienced in implementing storyboard. While, the second teacher rarely employed storyboard because sometimes it was difficult to set the text based on students' character.

Associated with its benefits, the two teachers deal with the implementation of the storyboard to interact and develop their characters, even it helped them to be able to read sentences with the aid of sequence pictures. However, lack of concentration became a challenge for the first teacher. While, the second teacher revealed that reading comprehension of mild-mentally retarded students sometimes did not positively increase through storyboard. It was caused by lack of vocabularies that students had.

Even though, those challenges can be solved by the teachers to design storyboard more interesting

and experience its benefits to teach reading for mildly-retarded students. The researcher points out that the current study has a limited number of subject involvement. In addition, further research is required to reveal other language skills that focus on mildly-retarded students.

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