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The Utilization of Narrative in Teaching of Moral Education in the Kindergartens

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ABSTRACT

The article reports on research into the use of storytelling (narratives) by kindergarten teachers in educating and learning of moral education. The study raised the question: Why do kindergarten teachers use narratives in teaching and learning of moral education for preschool children? The study took place at. A total of 15 teachers were selected based on a targeted sample. Participants were selected for their sensitivity, knowledge and understanding of their experiences. The kindergartens were chosen for their use of storytelling in teaching. Primary data collection was carried out through semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Additional data was collected through observation and document analysis. The topics were derived from the coding and categorization of interview transcripts and document analysis. The results highlighted three reasons why teachers use narratives in teaching and learning: they believe storytelling inspires children to behave prosaically; they believe that storytelling motivates children to have good characters; and they believe storytelling can help to improve children's language communication manner and skills. The study has summarized that, teachers play an important role in the success of moral education in kindergartens, and the quality of moral education through the use of narratives can be improved by improving teachers' understanding of moral education and the goals of moral education in the curriculum.

Keywords

Moral Education, Narratives, Preschool Children, Teachers.

Introduction

Narrative is a story that is told or written (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2016). Narrative is the description of actual or fictional events, actions, situations, and characters using storytelling techniques (ibid.). Narratives are an effective means of communicating and conveying messages containing moral values (Gooderham 1997). Through storytelling, advice can be delivered in a fun way that children can easily understand (Nussbaum, 1978). The use of narratives for moral education has a long history and it is universal (Tappan & Brown, 1989). Many have stated that

storytelling is central to learning as well as teaching morality (ibid.). Lickona (1991) explained how the method of using storytelling for moral education has been used for many years because stories do not impose on people what to do, but rather involve people in action. The use of imagination in stories touches people's hearts (McGinn, 1997).

In China, stories have been used for a long time for many purposes. They are a part of tradition, culture and identity of the Chinese people. Narratives have been used for one generation to another, to teach religion tradition, history, and moral. There are 55 ethnic groups in China that each ethnic group has its own way of storytelling. They try to use narrative in creative ways that makes narrative entertaining and enriching. As it's known, since ancient times Chinese were well known for their moral stories and as the history highlights, other nations used Chinese stories for educating moral qualities in their children.

In recent years, the use of narratives as a means of learning has returned as a trend in preschool educational institutions in China. The government is actively making the narrative more familiar through their publication as well as training. Seminars on methods and materials of storytelling as an educational media are conducted and organized by the Ministry of Education. Narrative is now a daily activity used to teach language, entertain children, and is widely used by many teachers to teach values to young children. Even the idea of using storytelling for moral education becomes a "trend." For many years, the most frequently practiced moral education program in many kindergartens in Tajikistan is the application of the model of habituation to the model of behavior formation. The scope of the kindergarten curriculum in China includes the following aspects of development: moral values, social, emotional and independent, language skills, cognitive skills, physical skills and art skills. The six developmental dimensions are combined into two integrated programs, which include: behavioral development using addiction to aspects of moral and religious values, social, emotional and self-reliance, and the development of basic skills in the aspects of language skills, cognitive skills, physical skills and artistic skills. Moral education is part of the shaping of behavior through an integrated addiction program. The habituation model helps the child understand the various problems associated with daily life, both at school and in the wider environment (family, friends and community). The purpose of this type of model is to educate students about good behavior, encourage them to behave correctly, and then make that behavior a habit. The program prepares students to develop attitudes and behaviors based on the values of religion and society as early as possible.

Chinese traditional moral values, including the best qualities of the Chinese people, are carefully preserved as the precious spiritual wealth of the nation. They have been formed and improved by society throughout the 5000-year history of China and are the main target and meaningful reference point for the moral education of modern children and adolescents in China.

In the "Plan for the Management of educational activities of kindergartens" published by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (hereinafter referred to as the "Plan") it is

noted that "it is necessary to show children the real wealth and advantages of Chinese traditional morality, to develop in preschoolers a sense of love for the Motherland"

The previous research and theories explained that the use of storytelling is mandatory for moral education, the government generalized the methods through seminars and workshops, and then many schools have already implemented the use of storytelling for moral education, however, how do teachers perceive this method? Why are they using storytelling in teaching and learning moral education of preschool children? This article is expected to provide information on the reasons why teachers use storytelling in teaching and learning moral education in kindergarten. If storytelling is effective for the moral education of preschool children, how do teachers understand and see it? An understanding from the teacher's perspective will help us to see how effective the actual use of narrative as an alternative model for teaching and learning moral education in kindergarten to address curriculum objectives.

Literature Review

In almost every culture in the world, we can find stories and traditions of storytelling. Narratives have been used to present and explain many great ideas and concepts, including morality. Storytelling is also one of the ways that many people have used to influence others. During the election campaign, candidates use stories to influence others. They share their success story as someone who was born into a low-income family and is now a wealthy merchant; this man wanted to be a leader and needed people to vote for him. Hochstetler (2006) agreed that storytelling plays an important role in our lives. We can learn a lot from talking about history, values and beliefs, ideas, good and evil. Stories can be used to convince people, strengthen the moral foundations of society. The story provides examples from life, such as, about honesty, decency and so on.

Many have mentioned that storytelling is central to research as well as the teaching of morality (Tappan & Brown, 1989). Imagination in stories touches people's hearts. The narratives not only illustrate a general theory of morality, but also demonstrate the complexity of morality. Narratives not only describe solutions, but also help to recreate moral difficulties. Lickona (1991) explained how the method of using storytelling for moral education has been used for many years because stories do not impose on people what to do, but rather involve people in action. Narrative has ethical values that are comprised of exemplariness and moral imperatives, as well as allows better understanding of moral behavior (Putnam 1978). Stories are a source of knowledge, and they enable us to understand love and kindness. The stories explore the chasm between good and our lives. (Nussbaum, 1978)

The famous researcher Luan Chuanda notes that the traditional morality of China is an outstanding moral legacy passed down from generation to generation, benefiting descendants. It includes the following aspects: the most important moral qualities of the nation, high national spirit, sense of dignity, optimistic mood, rich national ceremonies and traditions. And by using narratives

teachers can educate children about these values and they get to know the rich history of their country.

Anderson and Groft (1972) believed that children can learn from stories because stories provide experience. Stories are representations of life and mind in the form of words. Stories influence how children think and behave. Children enjoy listening to or reading stories over and over and this makes them remember details in stories. This repetition, combined with children's imaginations, makes stories one of the best ways to influence thinking. Bennett (1995) argued that heroic stories will inspire children to do good things. DeVries and Zan (1994) believed that stories could be an effective vehicle for discussing moral dilemmas, and that discussion could give children the opportunity to develop their rational abilities. The stories discuss situations and events that readers may have never encountered before, problems that they may never have encountered. They learn from the obstacles the characters face in the stories, how they face them and find solutions. They learn about the consequences of certain actions and the rewards for good actions. Krogh and Lamme (1985) explained that storytelling is beneficial for moral education, and combining children's literature with lively classroom discussion about moral issues in storytelling will contribute to children's moral development. The stories offer a resource for moral education through which children can learn from the "experiences" of those in the story (Winston 1998). Juncker (1998) conducted an interpretive study of how children explored moral issues when they participated in literary groups. Juncker found that they were interested and aware of moral concepts. Children have moralizing conversations. They commented on moral events or positions in the text, they interpreted the text, they shared other stories in response to the text, and discussed moral issues. Using storytelling for moral education goes beyond teaching right and wrong. Winston (1998) explained that moral education is the process by which children learn to develop their understanding of right and wrong, to think about how their actions affect others, and to express values such as caring, respect and responsibility. Narrative is a useful tool for moral education, for acquaintance with the concepts of justice, human rights and human well-being. Using storytelling for moral education allows children to look at situations from a different perspective. They are exposed to different worlds. Children use stories to process information and remember it better. Stories bring the situation to life and evoke emotion. Stories help people absorb and remember information better. Children see solutions and alternatives because stories are less abstract and provide an opportunity to look at problems from different perspectives. (Butcher, 2006).

Preschool children love stories. Stories teach them many concepts about life. There are many scholars who have studied how children learn morality from stories. Kilpatrick, Wolfe, and Wolfe (1994) have argued that storytelling characters help children understand problems from multiple perspectives; encourage children to share; and develop a sense of empathy. Storytelling is an ideal way to teach children to think critically, realistically, but also creatively. Children learn from stories of how people solve their problems, make friends, or help others.

The great Russian philosopher K.D. Ushinsky had such a high opinion of narratives that included them in his pedagogical system. The reason for the success of stories among children Ushinsky saw that the simplicity and immediacy of folk art correspond to the same properties of child psychology. "In a folk story," he wrote, "the great and poetry-child-people tells the children their childhood dreams and at least half of them believes in these dreams"

The educational role of narrative is great. There is an assertion that the pedagogical meaning of narratives lies in the emotional and aesthetic plane, but not cognitive. It is impossible to agree with this. The very opposition of cognitive activity to emotions is fundamentally wrong: emotional is inseparable, without emotion, as we know, knowledge of the truth is impossible. Storytelling, depending on the topic and content, makes listeners think and suggest thoughts. Often the child concludes: "This doesn't happen in real life." The question involuntarily arises: "What happens in real life?" Already the conversation of the narrator with the child, containing the answer to this question, has cognitive significance. However, narratives contain cognitive material directly. It should be noted that the cognitive significance of stories extends, in particular, to individual details of folk customs and traditions and even to everyday trifles.

Materials and methods

The research method for this study is qualitative research. A criteria-based and targeted sampling strategy was used to select kindergarten educators with experience and practice in using storytelling for moral education. Participants were selected for their sensitivity, knowledge and understanding of their experiences. Although the decision to participate was strictly voluntary, the participants who chose to participate in this study appeared to fit the roles defined by these criteria as they performed well in early childhood education and were therefore aware of the nature of the interview questions asked. researcher. The criteria set by the researcher is that teachers have been teaching for over two years and use storytelling in their classrooms.

The study took place in Zhejiang Hongda Nanxun kindergarten in China, that located in Huzhou city, Nanxun district. It has consistently and regularly incorporated narratives into the students' curriculum while the teachers use the method of narrating stories in learning. The kindergarten was chosen on the advice of the key respondents of the research, whom happen to teach at the mentioned school.

In order to get richer and deeper insight into the phenomenon of study, we used multiple research methods to study the phenomenon. We conducted in- depth interviews, observed storytelling practice and bookstore visits, and examined the list of books owned by the school and school documents. The purpose was to strengthen the findings obtained from the research through triangulation. Triangulation is used to bring different sources of information to confirm one interpretation and make the argument more convincing and credible.

The main subject of this research is a teacher, who has 24 years' experience as a kindergarten teacher, and now she is working as a Head of the kindergarten. Through her recommendation we choose 14 teachers from Hongda Kindergarten. It was chosen as research site because it has an excellent reputation in the community as creative and innovative kindergarten. It consistently and regularly incorporated storytelling into the student curriculum, while teachers used storytelling in teaching. Teachers in the kindergarten have experience using storytelling as teaching tools. Each participant was interviewed 2-4 times over a period of approximately 30-90 minutes. The interviews were taped and then transcribed to classify the information according to the coding scheme. Focus group discussions with teachers were conducted once. The researchers observed one visit to a bookstore. The documents collected include: National Curriculum, School Kindergarten Curriculum, Fact Sheet, Internet Information on the Kindergarten, Lists of Books Owned by the School, Names of Teachers' Selected Books and Favorite Children's Books, as well as copies of each of these books. The total time spent in the field is 4 months. Data analysis occurs concurrently and sequentially with data collection, data interpretation and report writing.

Data analysis is based on data reduction and interpretation - decontextualization and recontextualization. In this study, data analysis began by identifying themes that emerged from the raw data. Corbin and Strauss (2007) call this process "open source". In the next step of the analysis, we re-examined the identified categories to see the relationship. This complex process is sometimes referred to as "axis coding" (ibid.). Finally, we translated the concept model into a storyline that others will read. The goal was to ensure that the research is a rich, closely intertwined account that gives an accurate picture of the reality being studied.

Findings

The results showed that teachers have three reasons for using narratives in teaching and learning moral education in kindergarten, the first is because they believe narratives inspires children to behave prosocially. Second, they believe that stories motivate children to have good characters. And the final reason is because they believe narratives can help students to develop language communication skills.

Children's inspiration for prosocial behavior was one of the reasons kindergarten teachers used storytelling for moral education. Teachers do not use the word "prosocial behavior" in their explanations, but they provide examples of behaviors that are classified as prosocial, among others: caring, empathizing, working in a team, loving family, obeying parents, protecting the environment, posing others as example of action, take care of animals, love and care for others.

Mostly I use stories as a way of teaching many things including moral values and moral qualities. When there is an event, incident, umm...or a child behaved badly (wrongly) or hurt others, I would not just tell the story right away, umm... but I will wait for a right moment to tell the story. Story inspires children to do well, umm... to care, to empathize and many others.

Teachers' arguments that storytelling can inspire students to engage in prosocial behavior are similar to what Noddings (2002) explained that stories can inspire children to interact with others in real life. They learn that people are different and must be respected. Teachers stated that using storytelling is more effective in teaching children good or prosaic behavior than simply giving directions on what to do. This suggests that Kilpatrick, Wolfe, and Wolfe (1994) argued that storytelling characters help children understand problems from multiple perspectives; encourage children to share and develop a sense of empathy. They added that storytelling is a particularly good way to teach children to think realistically, as children can see in the stories how people solve their problems. Nobes and Pawson (2003) stated that children can learn and understand social rules and authority from a storybook. They learn how characters in the story fail to follow the rules and what the consequences are for them and the others.

The results of this study illustrates that the reasons teachers use storytelling to teach and teach moral education to preschool children is because storytelling can inspire good character in children. Shen Jin Fen explained that one way to cultivate good character is through stories. She gave an example of how storytelling can teach children to be responsible:

...Umm then I tell the story about a family, for instance, each member of the family has responsibilities, a mother whose job is doing the house works, umm... Father his job is doing other works, like going to work, earning money..., but there is one child, he actually has the duty and responsibility, but he does not do his job.

The reasons teachers use storytelling for moral education are analogous to the definition of morality explained by virtue ethics theory. The Theory of Virtue Ethics states that the moral value of actions depends on the degree to which they exhibit certain personality traits. Using the Theory of Virtue Ethics as the basis for moral education simply means promoting virtue in the classroom. The goals of moral education here are mainly related to the development of desirable or admirable character traits. Carr and Stutel (2005) have argued that to view virtue ethics as a theoretical basis for the concept of moral education would seem to be to view moral education as a matter of developing character traits along with promoting some understanding of moral value and relevance.

The narrative approach is based on the idea that the educational approach is based on stories that students have the opportunity to analyze, correlate with their actions, thereby actualizing the life experience of students. A story or narrative is the most common way in which it is possible to relay events and transmit information about historical figures. With its help, it is possible to develop a certain line of behavior, since the listener remembers the information, comprehends it and can use it in practice. Often students, encountering similar problems in life, correlate the actions of the characters with themselves, have the opportunity to analyze their possible actions or relate themselves to the heroes of the story, narration. There is an adaptation or adjustment of real-life

events to the structure of the developing story. In this case, the narrative acts not only as a translator of information from subject to subject, but also as a creator of behavioral policy, with the help of which new experience is acquired or previously acquired personal or social experience is actualized. In this situation, the teacher is assigned a certain share of responsibility for the correct selection of the story, text, narrative for the purpose of further discussion. In this situation, the task of the teacher is to create a clear and accessible text for students. Here the student's position is identical to the reader's (there is a certain cultural and educational level, the ability to work with text, etc.). The teacher's goal is to include the student in the process of pedagogical discourse, expanding vocabulary. As an experienced teacher who believes that narrative is important in teaching preschoolers gave the following statement;

... Umm, I use stories, because children in the preschool age tend to listen to the stories carefully and they are eager to tell stories themselves that it can help them to improve their language communication skills and the manner of communication with the people of different ages. And also using narratives may help children to improve their listening...

Conclusion

In conclusion, teachers use narrative for moral education because storytelling is effective in to inspire children to be prosaic; motivate children to have good characters; and strengthen children's language communication manner and skills. According to researchers, teachers use storytelling for moral education, but they use it just like they give instructions. Many good aspects of stories for moral education are not used. Researcher suggested that teachers should give an opportunity for children to contribute their own meaning into story in order to make the story different from sermons or instructions. Barrow (2007) explained that moral education is different from moral education, moral training or moral indoctrination. By telling stories teachers engage with children in moral thinking and enrich their understanding of moral thinking and feeling. McGinn (1997) explained how narratives allow students to be involved with the process of developing moral judgments. He stated the fictional work "can make people see and feel good and evil in a way that no philosophical tract can."

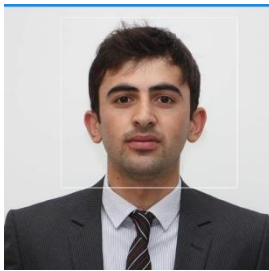
Teachers are aware that storytelling has benefit to inspire and motivate preschoolers. However, teachers should be well informed about how stories can actually be a powerful medium of moral development for children, and teachers should also understand that moral education is different from moral training.

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