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The Effectiveness of a program based on Digital Storytelling Approach in Developing Freshmen's EFL Narrative Writing Skills

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to investigate the effectiveness of using a program based on digital storytelling approach in developing EFL narrative writing skills among freshmen at Faculty of Education. The design of the research is a mixed research methodology. It combines both quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry. The study subjects consisted of twenty students enrolled in first year English section at Faculty of Education, Benha University, Egypt. They were tested before and after the intervention. They were taught through using a program based on digital storytelling approach. The instruments of the research included an EFL narrative writing skills test, rubric for marking subjects' answers and a semi-structured interview. Results of the study revealed a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the study subjects in the pre and post administration of the EFL narrative writing skills test in favor of the post administration. The researcher attributes this improvement to the use of the digital storytelling approach used in the present study. Implications for teachers of English, recommendations, and suggestions for further studies are presented at the end of the study.

Keywords: Digital Storytelling Approach –EFL Narrative Writing skills.

Introduction

Writing requires thinking and cognitive processes to be produced. It is considered the most complex skill because it goes through different stages i.e., prewriting, writing and editing to reach its final product. It is an individual process that requires thinking strategies and allows individuals to express themselves competently in the other language. It requires a certain level of linguistic knowledge, writing conventions, vocabulary and grammar. It is a process that heavily influenced by constraints of genres. Also, it is a continuous process of thinking, organizing, rethinking, and reorganizing (Franco, 2008; Harmer, 2004, Pope, 2002).

Therefore, writing has become an important method of communication. Letters, newspapers, magazines, email, text

messaging, and social networking are only a few examples of the ways in which writing is used to relay information and connect with one another on a daily basis. Each of these different genres has its own unique set of writing skills and organizational patterns associated with it. As the ways to communicate through writing continue to improve and grow, it is necessary for students to have exposure to various written forms in school settings, some of which include poetry, realistic fiction, persuasive writing, and historical reports in an effort to help prepare students for the writing that they will encounter outside of the classroom. Therefore, explicit teaching of a variety of different types of writing is necessary to ensure that students are able to effectively convey ideas through a variety of written forms and successfully comprehend materials presented in different ways (Martin, 2010).

Narrative writing is a genre of writing that serves as informing function, reporting events that happened or telling stories. Two skills involved in this kind of communication are the placement of events in appropriate sequence and the selection of details included in the story. A narrative is a time-ordered text that is used to narrate events, create, entertain and emotionally move an audience. Other social purposes of narrative writing may be to inform, persuade and socialize. The main structural components of narrative writing are the orientation, the complication and the resolution (Boucher, 2011).

Bing (2011) indicates that narrative writing tells a story; describes feelings and personal experiences; contains personal reflections, interpretations; tells autobiographical stories; describes people, places, and things using devices and techniques that evoke clear images; may contain dialogue; is told from a particular point of view; makes and supports a point; is filled with precise detail; uses verbs and modifiers; and uses conflict and sequence as does any story. The narrative skill is important skill to teach in an EFL classroom as narrative writing required a high level of thinking. Thus, it has become standard practice to use the general narrative structure to teach narrative writing for EFL learners.

The use of narratives as a tool for writing instruction teaches students the significance of brainstorming, planning, drafting, revising, editing, and redrafting. Therefore, narrative writing is

addressed because students are required to generate or retell stories in the classroom, and they are evaluated on their ability to express themselves using precise vocabulary and grammatically appropriate sentences in this genre. It is a multidimensional process that involves knowledge of story components, word-level skills (e.g. Spelling), language skills (e.g., grammar and syntactic awareness), vocabulary, mechanics, conventions of print, cognitive abilities (e.g., working memory), and audience awareness (Smith, 2011).

Writing in the narrative genre focuses mainly on text structure that consists of introduction, supporting subtopics, and a conclusion. Therefore, the well-formed narrative includes a title, introduction to the paper's topic, the provision of details related to the experience or event detailed images related to what the story was about, and a conclusion. These aspects effectively convey the author's voice and audience awareness. Another component of well-formed narratives is the successful use of conventions throughout the text. Conventions include correct use of punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and word consciousness. Another skill that is necessary in the production of a well-formed writing piece is its overall structure. For a piece of writing to be considered complete and of good quality, it must include not only the appropriate mechanics, but also complete sentences and a proper sense of paragraphing. As in the narrative, expository, and persuasive genres, these formal writing pieces include an introduction and a conclusion along with a topic sentence, supporting details, a strong sense of organization, voice, and awareness of the intended audience (Martin, 2010).

It can be concluded that in a narrative essay, the writer tells a story about a real-life experience. Everyone enjoys a good story especially one that captures the imagination. In narrative writing essay, the writer places a personal experience within the context of a larger theme. When writing a narrative essay, the writer wants not only to tell a good story, but also convey why the story has meaning.

Therefore, eliciting and maintaining students' engagement in narrative writing involves not only what they write about but also how their writing is received and responded to. Teachers respond to students' writing as evaluators who care about form rather than the content. Most EFL students hate to write as they have no experience,

no confidence, no ideas, a slender vocabulary, skewed grammar and vague notion of punctuation. So, they should practice, practice and still more practice to learn writing. They are always hesitant to write because they cannot generate ideas and they are afraid of making mistakes. Thus, students' writing might be improved if they understand the elements of critical thinking including: observations, facts, inferences, assumptions, opinions, arguments, and critical thinking (Abdel-Hack, 2009, Gocsik, 1997).

Teo (2006) indicates that during narrative writing, students face several problems, such as grammatical errors in their writing, and how to generate ideas for better content. Since writing is a complex problem-solving process, teachers are recommended to intervene at points in the writing process that can most benefit the writers. Therefore, in order to help EFL students understand the important components in narrative writing such as character, setting, problem, and solution, they are provided with complete questions that mostly begin with "wh" words to generate ideas such as ; Who did what?; What happened?; Where did it happen?; When did it happen?; Who are the main characters in the story?; Why did he/she/they do that?; What was the problem?; How did he/she/they solve the problem? ; What happened next?

Thus, there is a need for an approach to teach narrative writing that make students write freely without any pressure or fear from correction. One way to help students to improve their narrative writing skills is to create writing assignments that require students to move back and forth between observation and inference, facts and assumptions. This can be done through integrating technology in teaching. Thus, when students use technology devices, they cannot remain passive. They become able to make important choices while writing and ask themselves questions. This way would enable them to become better thinkers and better writers.

Therefore, the current advancements in the information and communication technology (ICT) have provided the learners with various tools in the form of computer-based or Internet-based resources to help them take charge of their own learning. Thus, many social network services such as Facebook and Twitter have spread out among worldwide. Thus, attention in the EFL classrooms

has shifted from teacher-centered to student- centered learning. Along with this shift, language instructors have employed various resources to equip their learners with the knowledge and skills that can make them more autonomous and independent in their learning. With respect to the use of this social media in the teaching and learning environment, the weblog, podcasts and digital storytelling have become progressively popular as authentic and constructive learning tools especially in the language classrooms (Pinkman, 2005).

In addition, with the growing popularity of computers and the internet, communication is no longer limited to a traditional face-to-face communication mode. Computer-mediated communication (CMC) prompts mutual and multiple ways of communication that offer people opportunities to produce writing in real-life situated contexts. CMC has been widely received in language teaching and learning. It increases users' target language exposure and production, improves learning attitudes, and encourages learners to learn autonomously and cooperatively. Digital storytelling constitutes a typical application of CMC .Thus, with the technological communication explosion and globalization, there is an experienced shift in traditional understandings of literacies to explore diverse modes of meaning-making. Currently, students encounter and interact with new digital literacies including Weblogs, wikis, digital texts and digital storytelling. In an effort to blend technology with education, digital storytelling approach is a way to generate interest, attention, and motivation for the digital generation in today's classroom (Yang,2009).

Combining the old age tradition of storytelling with the latest technology lead to compelling tool that motivates students to read more and write better. The approach is called digital storytelling. It is a good way to engage students in both traditional and innovative way of telling a story. It is emerging as a way to shape narrative and facilitates efforts to capture classroom moments for learners to reflect upon and revise practice, as well as to develop teaching consciousness. Digital stories revolve around a chosen theme and often contain a particular viewpoint. They are typically just a few minutes long and have a variety of uses, including telling of personal tales, recounting of historical events, or as a means to inform or

instruct on a particular topic (Condy, et al,2012; Malita and Martin, 2010; Robin,2008;Tendero, 2006) .

For English language learners, digital storytelling is highly beneficial. Firstly, they are required to use audio and written text .Secondly, students have to research and document their work, therefore listening and reading skills are also put to use. Thirdly, Web 2.0 stories have the unprecedented advantage that once uploaded on the Internet, they have a potentially huge audience .English language classrooms must provide students with an opportunity to work with technology and develop skills required for meaning making and representing through digital multimodal texts .This digital literacy should not be understood only as a part of language learning but as something that prepares students for effective performance across the curriculum and in all aspects of the modern life where meaning making and representing activities are required (Churchill,et.al.2008, Dreon, Kerper and Landis,2011).

There are many definitions of digital storytelling, but they all coincide in pointing out that digital stories combine traditional means of telling a story with different types of digital multimedia: images, audio, and video (graphics, text, recorded audio narration, video and music to present information on a specific topic).It is a good way to engage students in both traditional and innovative ways of telling a story. The students learn how to combine some basic multimedia tools such as graphics, animation, with skills such as writing, presentation, technology, interview, interpersonal, problem-solving and assessment skills (Hibbing and Erickson ,2003).

Alexander (2011) indicates that it includes a compelling narration of a story; provides a meaningful context for understanding the story being told; uses images to capture and/or expands upon emotions found in the narrative; employs music and other sound effects to reinforce ideas and invite thoughtful reflection from their audience(s). Banister, Hodges and Michalski (2005) clarify that it involves telling stories using multimedia technologies, providing a format for students to put their thoughts together, visually, and aurally. Also, Banaszewski (2005) defines it as a type of visual narrative that requires students to apply these skills. Because the

digital story uses images to carry the visual messages, students need explicit instruction in reading images and learning the codes and conventions. Hronová (2011) indicates that it is a useful means of how to combine both personal narratives with the use of technology in the classes of English language. It is the practice of combining personal narrative with multimedia (images, audio and text) to produce a short autobiographical movie.

In addition, Robin (2011) defines it as the practice of using computer- based tools to tell stories. It includes multiple forms of media: images and/or video, music, text and narration. Reinders (2011) indicates that it is simply the telling of stories in electronic form. Students can combine two or more of the following, either produced by themselves or by others: text ;audio ;music ;video; Photos. They can produce a video with voice-over, a website, an audio interview, or simply a written text. Hull and Nelson (2005) define it as a form of multimedia consisting of images and segments of video with background music and a voice-over narrative.

Therefore, digital storytelling has emerged as a powerful teaching and learning tool that engages both teachers and their students. It is the art of telling stories through the use of various multimedia such as text, images, audio and video. It combines the functions of visualizing and verbalizing, which are essential for language comprehension and thinking. The process of making digital storytelling required the students to apply their productive skills (writing and speaking). It is the practice of combining narrative with digital content, including images, sound, and video, to create a short movie, typically with a strong emotional component and captured the imagination of both students and teachers. It also, helps students work in groups (Kieler, 2010).

The concept of digital storytelling is closely linked to the use of new technology. It is a combination of the old storytelling tradition and new technology .It is a learner centered language learning activity that can be understood as a concept where the focus is on producing and sharing a story based on a personal experience or memory. It is a powerful technology tool in education that integrates computer technologies and the art of telling stories together. It can be used as a multimedia tool in language

learning to help students improve their English language skills by using technology to tell the story in their own words and voice (Normann ,2011).

Digital storytelling is a means of encouraging student engagement and reflection. This approach combines the use of technology with the benefits and skills of storytelling, e.g. selecting, comparing, inferring, arranging and revising. It is introduced as an approach to encourage and embed student reflection on the activities in which they were engaged, recognizing that reflection can be enhanced as a collaborative process. It employs digital technology to construct narrative. Using digital technologies, students can turn a one-dimensional writing composition into a digital story that can be published and shared to a small, intimate audience or with the world. It is a process that blends media to enrich and enhance the written or spoken word. It may have a narration overlay and a music background and may combine images, audio, and video to tell a story or make a factual presentation (Frazel ,2010; Jenkins and Lonsdale, 2007 ;Miller,2004;Sylvester and Greenidge, 2009).

Xu, Park and Baek (2011) indicate that digital storytelling enhances four student-centered learning strategies: student engagement, reflection for deep learning, project-based learning, and technology integration into the classroom. These learning strategies can be facilitated through digital storytelling activities. They are attracting a great deal of attention from teachers nowadays. To support their views, Sadik (2008) indicated that educators at all levels can use digital storytelling to support students' learning by encouraging them to organize and express their ideas in an individual and meaningful way. Also,Clarke and Adam (2011),Psomos and Kordaki (2012), Skinner and Hagood (2008) confirm that digital storytelling helps students work in groups and strengthen the bonds between students in class, and at the same time between students and their teacher, students acquire several technological skills through storytelling, creating digital stories helps the integration of students with learning difficulties through taking with this opportunity an active role, and the ability to narrate .

Müller ,et al.(2010) indicate that interactive digital storytelling helps teachers to use role-playing methods in classroom. Students

can develop and test dialogues that are correctly spoken out and enacted. It fosters thinking in alternatives and functional equivalences, and provides a means for self-directed learning. In addition, Frazel (2010) summarizes the value of digital storytelling as it is active, not passive process; creates atmosphere of excitement and fun; fosters appropriate use of technology within curriculum; weaves into all subject areas; and effective for both visual and auditory learners.

Therefore, digital storytelling is an excellent application in the foreign context that improves the traditional storytelling techniques, basic word processing programs and social software by incorporating multimedia and multi-literacies resulting in increased levels of engagement, analysis and critical thinking skills. It has been shown to increase learning engagement and improve English reading, writing, oral expression and listening comprehension skills. It is a compelling language activity that motivates students to use the language both inside and outside the classroom. It is recognized as a motivating instructional approach that engages students in critical thinking and reflective learning. Teachers must invest more time/effort in getting both content producers and consumers to develop their storytelling and narrative skills. It usually contains computer based images, text, recorded audio narration, video clips and music (Dogan and Robin,2006b; Maddin,2012 ;Menezes,2012;Tsou et al., 2006).

Digital storytelling allows collaboration that can encourage collaborative skills and creativity. It facilitates an emotional connection to the content, and allows for the sharing of that content. It addresses the need by giving students opportunities to interact and brainstorm through the creative process. Also, it motivates students and involves them in the writing process, helps improve writing skills by having students learn to write with a concise point of view .It provides students with a variety of modes that they can use to find and use their own authorial voice through multi-literacies (Alexander ,2011,Boase, 2008, Kieler, 2010).

Gillespie(2009) ; Lambert (2002) ;Miller (2009) and Porter(2004) clarify that digital storytelling is an effective way to engage students in their learning. Using the digital storytelling gives students an

opportunity for using the tools that are relevant and meaningful in their lives. The ability to tell their story in a variety of ways, combining sounds, music, graphics, photographs, and original artwork, allows them to show their understanding and express their creativity. The power of digital storytelling comes from the collaboration and teamwork process. In a collaborative environment, students are actively engaged in the exchange of ideas and are responsible for reaching their own academic goals as well as helping others in their group to succeed. It engages students in critical thinking, writing, creativity, and communication and encourages them to be the creators of knowledge. It involves connecting the events or information in the story to the audience through personal reflections. It involves writing a script, planning a storyboard, revising the script, sequencing images, adding narratives, adding transitions and music.

Students in digital storytelling experience learning by doing while making a digital story. It is technology-supported approach for enhancing learning, including critical thinking skills, motivation, and information literacy. It allows opportunities for student control of the learning process and self-expression, fostering learning confidence and learning motivation . Thus, integrating visual images with written text enhances student comprehension, and digital storytelling is an especially good technology tool for collecting, creating, analyzing, and combining visual images with written text. Teachers who are able to create their own digital stories may find that they can be particularly helpful not only in engaging students in the content but also in facilitating discussion about the topics presented in a story and helping make abstract or conceptual content more understandable .It is the practice of combining narrative with digital content, including images, sounds and video, to create a short movie, typically with a strong emotional component. It can range from the simple use of slides and pictures that correspond to a narrative to the complex use of advanced sound, visual, and transition effects. It is a medium of expression, communication, integration, and imagination (Barrett, 2006; Bull and Kajder ,2004; Oyarzun ,et.al. ,2010; Zheng,et al.2011).

Thus, all digital stories bring together some mixture of digital graphics, text, recorded audio narration, video and music to present information on a specific topic. It encompasses all narrative forms and processes produced and shared digitally, including narrative, image-only stories, and multimedia narrative integrating image, sound and text. It enhances their creativity as well as their English language skills (Beach ,2012,Bran, 2010, Hartley and McWilliam,2009, Miller, 2004).

Moreover, Lambert (2006) has argued that digital storytelling has certain key elements; emotional content (while watching a digital story, the audience is deeply engaged and its reaction is rewarding for students, it validates their efforts, creativity and individuality). Voice and images (as students narrate and illustrate their own scripts, their ideas are put across more clearly than in traditional stories, which do not benefit from the input of photos or intonation). Economy (digital stories are short, which sharpens the focus of the story). Pacing (the author adds emotion to the content where he or she thinks is necessary).

Hronová (2011) clarified different kinds of digital storytelling such as photo stories: they are combinations of still images and texts. Students only need to know how to take photos and how to make a PowerPoint presentation in which the photos will be put together with the text. Video Words: they are combinations of words or phrases and pictures to make a film or a short and simple presentation. The teacher can take some photos and bring them to the classes and ask students to match the pictures with the words. Presentations: The most common story-making process is a PowerPoint presentation. A presentation is a combination of a text and pictures to present a certain topic. Students have to summarize the most important ideas and present them in a certain order. They are supposed to know more information than just that which is written in the text of the presentation. Students should be able to speak without notes; they should express their ideas clearly and keep the touch with audience. Staging: it is a kind of presentation but the students are not focused on facts but they have to find a way how to perform their feelings, actions, incidents, sayings etc. Students should present the things which are familiar to them.

Video clips: The last kind is a video clip. While creating a video clip, students put pictures, words, recorded conversations or narrations and music together to make a meaningful story which covers all kinds of digital stories mentioned above. A video clip talks about a certain topic which is familiar to the story-makers and which reflects his or her personal point of view.

Also, Robin (2006) classified the different types of digital stories into three main groups: personal narratives, historical documentaries, and inform or instruct stories. Personal narratives describe events, details, thoughts, feelings, and experience in the writer's life, where these events are presented in an order similar to what actually happened in time. Historical documentaries describe the life of people or institutions. It can also be created by using achieved content such as photographs and other materials, available on the Internet and other bibliographic sources. Perhaps the most popular type of digital story is one in which the author tells of personal experiences. These stories can revolve around significant events in life and can be emotionally charged and personally meaningful to both the author and the viewer. **Stories That Inform or Instruct:** it is used primarily to convey instructional material in many different content areas. Teachers can use this type to present information to their students.

Several studies such as Sadik (2008)'s and Van Gils (2005)'s have shown that digital storytelling goes beyond the capabilities of traditional storytelling by generating student interest, concentration, and motivation, facilitating student collaboration and organization of ideas, helping students to comprehend complex learning content, and presenting knowledge in a meaningful manner. Thus, Yang and Wu (2012) indicate that digital storytelling constitutes a meaningful approach for energizing instructors and motivating students. It provides a clear procedure that helps instructors design instructional activities easily, based on the learning by doing method of constructivism. It consists of four phases: pre-production; production; postproduction; and distribution as follows:-

- Pre-production includes five steps :a) posing questions in authentic scenarios, b) exploring topical information, c) writing the script and eliciting peer review, d) performing oral

storytelling, and e) designing a story map and storyboard. At the beginning of class, the instructor poses certain questions about a topic based on contexts or experiences related to the students' lives and interests in order to encourage participants to consider alternatives and decide upon a topic.

- Next, students research the topic for information to write scripts which reflect a logical story or sequence of events.
- After completing the scripts, they question each other, engaging in peer critiquing or coaching. Students first practice telling their stories in a traditional manner, which aids in the discovery of details essential to their stories.
- Afterward, a story map is designed to illustrate the main components of the story and their relationship to the overall narrative. For instructors, story mapping provides a basis for immediate assessment of students' stories and provides feedback on how to improve weaker elements of their stories. In addition, students represent their stories in a storyboard format, arranging the sequence of scenes, effects, and other digital components.
- Each task in this pre-production phase is paper-based, requiring focus on the content rather than multimedia elements. Writing scripts and story treatments is a key process for creating digital stories since the final product is media-based.
- During the production phase, students prepare multimedia elements and record their own voices.
- Then, in the post-production phase, the content is arranged and edited into a digital story.
- During the distribution phase, students share their comments and digital stories with others. The dynamic process of creating digital stories develops a deeper connection with the subject matter being learned as well as relevant extra-curricular experiences.

In addition, Frazel (2010) divided the process of digital storytelling into three stages: preparation, production, and presentation. Although presentation is the final step, it is critical that it informs every aspect of planning and production. The process takes time, and teachers may want to apply assessments throughout the development as follows:-

1. **Preparation Stage:** During this stage, students may develop a concept map, generate storyboards, and then create a script for written text or narration. The teacher should generate a formative assessment rubric to help guide students throughout the process. Teacher and students define their audience and determine what the final product will be (video or podcast) and how it will be presented (i.e., in class or posted to the web). They organize the materials and plan for the DS project/assignment. The teacher will decide at this point whether to have students work as individuals, in small groups, or as a whole class. The teacher will also begin creation of a formative assessment. As part of preparation of the assignment, teachers may choose to create an introductory digital storytelling about the topic and have students brainstorm ways to find meaning, point of view, or emotional connections of their own.
2. **Production Stage:** Once all the resources and the storyboard are in place, guided by the formative assessment rubric and a partial script, students begin production work. Students select visual and audio elements of the digital storytelling. If they are creating a video product, they will most likely be working with a slide presentation application. Guided by storyboard and script, students prepare a narration. The teacher acts as mentor, depending on grade level, and assists with activities such as putting the slides in order or timing the slides. Music and sound effects may be employed.
3. **Presentation Stage:** digital storytelling should be saved onto a file sharing site or archived onto a CD. It is played for the classroom or posted to the web. There are many genres of digital stories and digital story making applications. There is classic DS, and there are photo essays, e-Portfolios, and Weblogs. Students should not be limited by the categories presented here, only by their own imaginations or limitation of tools and time.

Therefore, digital storytelling typically begins with a script. The storyteller assembles rich media to support the ideas and emotions in that script, including music or other audio effects, personal or public domain images, animations or video, and other electronic elements. The storyteller pieces together and edits digital storytelling, creating

a short movie, usually about two to four minutes long, in one of various file formats (Lambert, 2002, Lambert,2009, Meadows and Kidd,2009).

As a result, the process of finding a digital story forces storytellers to choose a topic that can be appropriately conveyed to a particular audience or purpose. This creates an opportunity to reflect on life and find deep connections with subject-matter. After choosing a proper subject's story, digital storytelling begins with writing. Based on the outcomes of their initial research and reflection, the digital storytellers begin to write and assemble the needed components of their story. They write, rewrite and continue the writing process through multiple drafts. It is important to note that the most effective digital stories have their genre in writing, so it is important to emphasize the value of multiple drafts. Within the writing, it is important to remember that the story has a central theme. The importance of this theme is for the viewer of the story, even if the story is about another person's experience, the viewer relates to the story because they have experienced similar types of events in their lives or because they are interested or captivated by the theme. Thus, during this process, the digital storytellers will develop communication skills, represented by writing. Through writing, the digital storytellers can increase their retention and promote critical thinking as well as bring clarity and understanding to complex topics (Malita, 2010, Meadows and Kidd, 2009).

Thus, through digital storytelling students develop communication skills, learn to ask questions, express opinions, construct narratives and write for an audience, improve also their language and computer skills by using software that combines a variety of multimedia: text, images, audio, video and web publishing. Also, when digital stories are created, students not only become more technologically literate, but they also become designers, listeners, interpreters, readers, writers, communicators, and thinkers (Banaszewski, 2005, McWilliam,2009).

Context of the Problem

In light of the researcher's experience in teaching at the university level, and the review of related studies (Abdel-Hack, 2009, Helwa, 2013, Abdel-Hack and Helwa, 2014) it could be noticed that teachers face many obstacles in English language teaching and learning, for instance, inadequately equipped classrooms and educational technology. They also lack of opportunity to use English in their daily lives. Moreover, most EFL students hate to write as they have no experience, no confidence, maybe no ideas, a slender vocabulary, skewed grammar and probably vague notion of punctuation. So, students should practice, practice and still more practice to learn writing. They are always hesitant to write because they cannot generate ideas and they are afraid of making mistakes.

Therefore, it is important to help students to be familiar with writing and how it works as a tool of learning and self-expression. Thus, teachers should provide opportunities for students to share their own experiences to develop their confidence and autonomy in writing. Students should be encouraged to write cohesively and coherently. Teachers' feedback plays a crucial role in improving and enhancing the quality of students' written essays (Helwa, 2013).

To document the problem of the present research, the researcher conducted a pilot study on a sample of first year students enrolled in English Section at Benha Faculty of Education (twenty five students). The pilot study consisted of an EFL narrative writing skills test. The test included three questions in order to assess the EFL narrative writing skills among the students. The results of the test revealed that students lack concision, they often wander to incorporate the ideas without focusing on the main ideas covering the whole topic. Therefore, students cannot gain a concise topic which contains the main ideas and several major supporting details. Concision helps the students make their writing focusing on the main points. The lack of accuracy: students also have difficulty in expressing the main ideas clearly. Generally, they concentrate so much on the unimportant points. The lack of objectiveness: students often have a habit of expressing their own opinions. Many of students involve in the gaps of interpreting their own thoughts and giving their own judgments. They cannot state exactly the author's

points of view as well as his or her tone or voice during the selection. The lack of coherence: students are often not skillful in using suitable connections and they do not have a willingness of making a well- organized outline before they write. They consider that writing is simply putting main ideas and supporting details incoherently together without connections.

Statement of the problem

In spite the importance of EFL narrative writing skills, first students enrolled in English section at Benha Faculty of Education have difficulties in their narrative writing. The present study aims at examining the effectiveness of a program based on digital storytelling approach in developing EFL narrative writing skills among freshmen at Faculty of Education.

Questions of the Research

1. What are the features of a program based on digital storytelling approach in developing EFL narrative writing skills among freshmen at Faculty of Education?
2. How far is a program based on digital storytelling approach effective in developing EFL narrative writing skills among freshmen at Faculty of Education?

Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the related studies and research questions, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants in EFL narrative writing skills on the pre-and post- administration of the EFL narrative writing skills test in favor of the post- administration.
2. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants in EFL narrative writing sub-skills on the pre-and post- administration of the EFL narrative writing skills test in favor of the post- administration

Review of Related Studies

Narrative writing relies on personal experiences and is often in the form of a story. Narrative essays are told from a defined point of

view, often in first person, so there is feeling as well as specific and often sensory details provided to get the reader involved in the elements and sequence of the story. It offers writers a chance to think and write about themselves and their experiences.

Narrative is an essential component of digital storytelling. It invites the past to interact with the present and helps students to construct meaning and make sense of experience. In composing the narrative script for digital storytelling, the past is reinterpreted from the present. The composition of a narrative requires introspection and reflection that can ultimately serve to shape students' understanding of both who they are and who they want to become. Within the digital format of storytelling, the meaning communicated through the narrative is enhanced with images and music (Ross, 2010 ,Sun and Nippold, 2012).

Martin (2010) conducted a study to determine the skills that students acquire during personal narrative writing instruction. The sample of the study included six students of varying ability levels as well as the classroom teacher. Data was collected through classroom observation, interviews, and student work samples. The results of this study suggested that personal narrative writing instruction teaches students how to effectively organize a writing piece, include proper mechanics, vary word choice, and how to edit and revise.

As a result, digital storytelling is introduced as an approach to encourage and embed student reflection on the activities in which they were engaged, recognizing that reflection can be enhanced as a collaborative process. Thus, by using digital storytelling, students have the possibility to express themselves in their own way, as well as having the sense of ownership of their digital content creation. Creating digital storytelling enables the students to use their own voice and the potential for wide representation of their ideas. Likewise, through their stories, the students will have the possibility to stand out, and thus they will be more engaged and motivated regarding the self-representation associated with their stories, highlighting specific characteristics or events which are part of establishing their personal identity.

Digital storytelling is an integrated application of multiple media and software that utilizes the art and techniques of storytelling with new methods, contributing to make learners involved in the learning situation. It is an effective approach for helping students collect information, create new ideas and organize their knowledge that improves their comprehension of the learning content. It is an effective approach for promoting cooperation and knowledge construction in classrooms (Bozdoğan ,2012, Hung, Hwang and Huang, 2012, Jianing ,2007).

Tendero (2006) examined the use of digital storytelling and its effects on pre-service English teachers. Data were collected from class discussions, the teacher journal, students' digital stories, and student interviews. The results of the study reveal that digital storytelling is emerging as a way to shape narrative and values the power of story as a tool for self-discovery and reflection. It is a creative process to develop self-esteem, critical thinking, Oral and written communication. It has arisen as a form of narrative expression that is crafted into a media production.

Snelson and Sheffield (2009) clarified that digital storytelling has arisen as a form of narrative expression that is crafted into a media production. Additionally, through digital storytelling, the student is increasing his creativity, visualization skills, oral language and thinking skills. It consists of a series of moving images combined with narration and a soundtrack to tell a story. These stories generally are relatively short, just a few minutes in length. It also contains some mixture of computer-based images, text, recorded audio narration, video clips, or music.

Therefore, the process of finding digital storytelling forces storytellers to choose a topic that can be appropriately conveyed to a particular audience or purpose. After choosing a proper subject's story, digital storytelling begins with writing. Based on the outcomes of their reflection, the digital storytellers begin to write and assemble the needed components of their story. The digital storyteller writes rewrites and continues the writing process through multiple drafts. It is important to note that the most effective digital stories have their genesis in sound writing, so it is important to emphasize the

value of multiple drafts. Within the writing, it is important to remember that the story has a central theme. The importance of this theme is for the viewers of the story viewers relate to the story because they have experienced similar types of events in their lives or because they are interested or captivated by the theme. Thus, during this process, the digital storytellers will develop communication skills, represented by writing. Through writing, they can increase their retention and promote meaning as well as bring clarity and understanding to complex topics (Malita, 2010).

After the draft is completed and the process of collecting the different components is also finished, a transformation of the essential components of digital storytelling into a script would be necessary. At this stage, it is important to remember the final goal of processing digital storytelling: a digital story between 2-3 minutes in length, which is composed of about 20-25 images and has a narrative length of about three-four pages. Thus, it is important to understand that digital storytelling must be clear, precise, but concise, in order to assure that the message is correctly understood, in the given and proper time. Therefore, the digital storytellers will rewrite and rebuild the stories, assemble also the multimedia elements conveyed in order to contribute to the meaning of the story, rather than being included only to make the story more interesting. Thus, through digital storytelling, students begin to comprehend how all the elements of writing a narrative work together and how to manipulate them for the best effects in readers and viewers.

Therefore, by sharing their creation, the digital storytellers could get formative feedbacks and suggestions from peers. The idea of sharing also includes the documentation of resources, and the inclusion of appropriate citation in their products. Thus, they will be actively engaged in the exchange of ideas and expressing opinions, in asking for and receiving feedback. Another important benefit of sharing the stories is that the digital storyteller is able to observe the story and is therefore detached from the presentation, as opposed to an oral presentation where the author is part of the process. This allows the digital storyteller to actively participate in the critique with their peers. Moreover, by sharing a story, it could be obtained a deeper insight into its meaning can be obtained. The sharing and

evaluating of digital stories among peers is an excellent way to foster self-expression (Malita, 2010).

Thus, through digital storytelling students develop communication skills, learn how to ask questions, how to express opinions, construct narratives and write for an audience, also improving their language and computer skills by using software that combines a variety of multimedia: text, images, audio, video and web publishing. The process of storytelling, based on reflection and communication of personal experience, can increase retention and promote meaning as well as bring clarity and understanding to complex topics. Also, when digital stories are created, students not only become more technologically literate, but they also become designers, listeners, interpreters, readers, writers, communicators, and thinkers. The process of digital storytelling provides high-quality learning experience because the learning experience honors the writing process first. Thus, by writing, the digital storytellers have the possibilities to express and enhance their creativity by developing interesting stories to capture and retain the audience's attention (Holdich and Chung, 2003).

Kajder, Bull and Albaugh (2005) clarified the steps to make a digital story. At the start, storytellers acted as storywriters by composing the story and the script. After working on the storyboard with the script order, the script was revised and selected images were sequenced in the storyboard. Students were told to add effects, transitions and titles before recording their voice over the story slides. Narration was required for several reasons: in order to have students try out each function of the digital story, to practice pronunciation skills, to check each student's contribution by hearing their voices and finally to signal the power of one's own voice on the listener. Thus, according to Chung (2006) narration through storyteller's voice over the images stands as a key factor for the authenticity. After students complete their movie-making tasks, digital stories prepared by pairs were collected as a requirement of the course, unlike YouTube as the host used for video uploading. This view is consistent with the results of a study conducted by Snelson and Sheffield (2009), they selected Facebook as the place of

digital story uploads. Thus, students had the chance to see and comment on their friends' work as they wish.

Consequently, Dogan and Robin (2006) conducted a study to highlight how the teachers incorporated digital storytelling in the classroom through investigating the educational uses of creative digital storytelling contests for students and teachers. The results clarified that the teachers who used digital storytelling in the classroom observed increases in student skills such as presentation skills and writing skills.

Verdugo and Belmonte (2007) clarified the effect of using digital stories on improving listening comprehension with Spanish young learners of English. They show greater improvement in children's progressive understanding of the linguistic structure, vocabulary, sound patterns and prosody of the foreign language as compared to that obtained by learners receiving language instruction without the use of Internet-based technology.

Ramirez-Verdugo and Belmonte (2007) investigated the effect of digital storytelling on the understanding of spoken English by elementary Spanish ESL students. Students exposed to the digital storytelling scored significantly higher on listening comprehension measures than students who listened to stories told by the teacher. Visual images in the digital storytelling and student interaction with the application helped students focus on the oral language. Therefore, the integration of digital storytelling may lead to improved reading, writing and oral skills due to improved listening comprehension and levels of engagement. There is a strong case for digital storytelling integration into the language arts curriculum based on improved English communication skills.

Sadik (2008) explored the impact digital storytelling has on Egyptian high-school students' learning and engagement across the curriculum, including language arts and English language classes. Data revealed that students who created digital stories showed significant improvement in engagement levels and learning outcomes. Students used oral narration more than text and expressed personal connections to the topic, indicating increased engagement through the use of authorial voice. One implication of

Sadik's (2008) study is digital storytelling may encourage oral expression due to personal engagement with a topic. Increased oral expressive opportunities through digital storytelling may result in improved oral communication skills.

Sylvester and Greenidge (2010) suggested that when developing digital stories in a university classroom setting, students go through the process of writing a story by traditional methods. The story is recorded and preferably as a performance, allowing the audience to hear the personal emotion inflected in the voice. Once the story has been written and read, personal photographs, pictures or image frames that complement the narration are included. Music or sound effects are added to enhance the narration. Finally a title frame is included as well as rolling credits to cite sources, and add acknowledgements. Students used media from the internet to enhance their stories.

Normann (2011) conducted a qualitative study to investigate the use of digital storytelling in language learning and explore young learners' meta-reflections on potentials for learning when digital storytelling is used as a learner centered language learning activity. The sample of the study consisted of a group of secondary school students. Data have been collected from questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and reflection logs and been analyzed thematically. Results of the study confirmed that digital storytelling improved oral and written language skills among students. The study also showed increased motivation among students.

Yang (2012) explores English language learners' crafting process of digital storytelling project in an instructional setting. By analyzing two English language learners' digital storytelling projects and their personal crafting narratives, the researcher reports how these learners approach multimodal digital storytelling composing, construct hybrid texts to deliver their messages, and assign meanings to the semiotic resources used in their digital storytelling .

Yang and Wu (2012) explored the impact of digital storytelling on the academic achievement, critical thinking, and learning motivation of senior high school students learning English as a foreign language. The study adopted a pretest and posttest quasi-experimental design

involving 110 10th grade students in two English classes. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected, including English achievement and critical thinking scores, questionnaire responses for learning motivation, as well as recordings of student and teacher interviews for evaluating the effectiveness of digital storytelling in learning. The findings indicate that digital storytelling participants performed significantly better than lecture-type participants in terms of English achievement, critical thinking, and learning motivation. Interview results highlight the important educational value of digital storytelling, and both the instructor and students reported that digital storytelling increased students' understanding of course content, willingness to explore, and ability to think critically.

Abdel-Hack and Helwa (2014) investigate the effectiveness of using digital storytelling and Weblogs instruction in enhancing EFL narrative writing and critical thinking skills among EFL majors at Faculty of Education. The design of the research is one group pre-posttest. The sample of the research consisted of forty third-year EFL majors, at Faculty of Education, Benha University, Egypt. The research sample was engaged in certain activities such as storytelling, journal writing, personal diaries and reflection Weblogs. The instruments of the research included an EFL narrative writing questionnaire; an EFL narrative writing test; an EFL critical thinking questionnaire; an EFL critical thinking scale and interview prepared by the researcher. The instruments were applied to the sample of the research before and after implementing the program. Results of the research revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the study sample in the pre and post assessment of EFL narrative writing and critical thinking skills in favor of the post assessment. Therefore, the EFL narrative writing and critical thinking skills of the sample were developed as a result of teaching through integrating digital storytelling instruction and Weblogs. This confirmed that using digital storytelling and Weblogs instruction is effective in enhancing the EFL narrative writing and critical thinking skills among EFL majors at Faculty of Education.

Consequently , Boucher (2011); Di Blas and Paolini (2013) ; Lammers (2012) ; Skinner and Hagood (2008); Smeda, Dakich and Sharda (2010) and Zheng,et.al.(2011) confirm that digital storytelling is an innovative pedagogical approach that has the potential to engage learners in student-centered learning, and enhance learning outcomes across the curriculum. It provides a vehicle for combining digital media with innovative teaching and learning practices. It encourages additional educational outcomes, enhances learners' motivation, and helps teachers in building constructivist learning environments that encourage creative problem-solving based on collaboration and peer-to-peer communication. In addition, it can be used to facilitate integrated approaches to curriculum development, and engage learners in higher order thinking and deep learning. It allows students to construct narrative and expository texts through combining multiple media including images (e.g. photos, graphics), voice, music, video, transitions, titles, and movement. They can then save their digital stories as movie files for playback on a computer or they can export their stories to the internet

Methodology

A. Subjects

Participants of the present research consisted of 20 students. They were chosen randomly from first year students enrolled in English section at Faculty of Education, Benha University, Egypt. The participants represented one group which was taught through using a program based on digital storytelling approach.

B. Design

The present research is a partially mixed research methodology. It combines both quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry to help bridge the gap between quantitative and qualitative research. To conduct the quantitative analysis the pre- post experimental group design was used. The study sample was tested before and after conducting the experiment. In addition a qualitative analysis of the students' performance is provided.

C. Instruments

In order to fulfill the purposes of the study, the following instruments were designed.

A.EFL Narrative Writing Skills Test

The EFL narrative writing skills test was prepared by the researcher to measure narrative writing skills among first year students at Faculty of Education, Benha University, Egypt. It was used as a pre-post test. The test consisted of three questions (writing three essays) suitable for students' level and background knowledge (see appendix A). The students are required to write three narrative essays. The time of the EFL narrative writing skills test lasted two hours .It was counted through getting the mean between the fastest student and the lowest one in answering the test questions. The test was graded by the researcher through using a rubric prepared by her. The rubric consists of seven parts; each part has three items ranging from "3" marks to "1" mark. The students were given "3" marks when their performance is high and "1" mark when their performance is low (see appendix B).

B .Semi-Structured Interview

The interview was constructed to examine the importance of digital storytelling approach among first year students enrolled in English section at Faculty of Education, Benha University, Egypt and its effectiveness in developing EFL narrative skills .The interview took the format of face to face semi-structured interview. The researcher interviewed students one time at the beginning of the study, a second time in the middle, and a third time at the end of the study, to gain greater insight on their narrative writing skills development ,throughout the ten weeks. The researcher generally asked the students about their participation in the program. She used open ended questions to avoid responding with yes-no (See Appendix C). Five students participated in the interview and their responses were video recorded. The interview lasted for one hour. At the beginning of the interview, the researcher greeted the students and asked them to give brief self-introduction as a way to set the goal for the interview. Then, she told them the purpose of the interview and their own roles. If students did not understand any question, she

could simplify it or change it .At the end of the interview, the researcher thanked the students for their participation.

Determining the Validity of the Research Instruments

The EFL narrative writing skills test and semi-structured interview were submitted to a jury member (see appendix D), they were asked to determine the validity of the instruments in terms of clear instructions, items and its suitability for the students' level. They indicated that the test and the interview instructions were clear and suitable for students' levels and background knowledge. Therefore, the test and the interview were considered valid measures of narrative writing skills (Face Validity).To ensure the content validity of the test and the interview; they were developed in the light of a systematic and accurate review of literature and previous studies. This accurate and systematic review determined the general form of the test, questions and methods of correction. Therefore, the content of the test and the interview was representative of the skills that were intended to be measured. Thus, the test and the interview were valid and having a content validity.

Determining the Reliability of the study Instruments

The reliability of the instruments was measured by using the test-retest method. The instruments were administered to a group of third year students enrolled in English section at Faculty of Education, Benha University, Egypt. Then, they were administered to the same group again after two weeks. The Pearson correlation between the two administrations was (0.88) at the 0.01 level. Therefore, the instruments were reliable.

A Program Based on Digital Storytelling Approach

For achieving the purpose of the research, the researcher designed a program based on digital storytelling. After assessing first year students' enrolled in English section at Faculty of Education, Benha University, Egypt narrative writing skills, the study sample was required to attend a program based on digital storytelling approach (see appendix E).

Objectives of a Program Based on Digital Storytelling Approach

The program aimed at developing EFL narrative skills among first year students enrolled in English section at Faculty of Education, Benha University, Egypt.

Content of a Program Based on Digital Storytelling Approach

The topics chosen for the program were selected from books and studies enriched with topics that motivate students. They contained variety of topics , situations and discussions designed for developing narrative writing skills. They were suitable for the first year students' enrolled in English section at Faculty of Education, Benha University, Egypt levels such as Robin (2008); Frazel (2010) ;Hronová (2011); Smith (2011); Reinders (2011) and Sun and Nippold (2012).

A Program Based on Digital Storytelling Approach Framework

The treatment began on 14th February 2015 and continued through 18th April 2015. The researcher met the students for twice a week for two hours per week for ten weeks and also communicated with them via Facebook group and a blog. Week (1) was used for pre-testing and week (10) was used for post testing. Each session was devoted to the following: introduction, objectives, procedures, the role of the researcher and student and finally the performance. During the instructional procedures, different sessions had different learning goals and different methods were applied.

The program was taught to the study sample by the researcher herself. It lasted ten weeks with eighteen instructional sessions and each session lasted for two hours. At the beginning of the program, the researcher introduced to the students what they are going to do. First, she told them about the objectives of the program and what they are supposed to gain as a result of their participation in the program (Goal Setting). After that she told them about the importance of narrative writing skills. Then she began to introduce the concept of digital storytelling approach and its importance for language learning and EFL narrative writing skills.

Following the introduction of the program, the rest of the program were instructional sessions through which the EFL narrative writing skills were introduced .At the beginning of each session the researcher told students the objectives of the session, the researcher's role, the student's role, the instructional materials that will be used, the activities they will perform and ways of evaluating their progress .At the end of the each session, the researcher gave students some activities related to what they had learned in order to be sure that they mastered the skills in each session (formative evaluation). At the end of the program, the researcher assessed the students' achievement after implementing the program using the EFL narrative writing skills test (summative evaluation).

The procedures of the Program

In order to implement the digital storytelling Approach, the procedures of the study based on Frazel (2010), Xu, Park and Baek (2011) and Yang and Wu (2012) s' where they indicate that digital storytelling consists of different phases: preparation, pre-production; production; postproduction; distribution and presentation:-

1. **Preparation Stage:** During this stage, students may develop a concept map, generate storyboards, and then create a script for written text or narration. The teacher should generate a formative assessment rubric to help guide students throughout the process. The researcher and students define their audience and determine what the final product will be (video or podcast) and how it will be presented (i.e., in class or posted to the web). They organize the materials and plan for the DS project/assignment. The researcher will decide at this point whether to have students work as individuals, in small groups, or as a whole class. The researcher will also begin creation of a formative assessment. As part of preparation of the assignment, researcher may choose to create an introductory digital storytelling about the topic and have students brainstorm ways to find meaning, point of view, or emotional connections of their own.

2. Pre-production includes five steps :-

- ❖ **Posing questions in authentic scenarios,**
- ❖ **Exploring topical information,**
- ❖ **Writing the script and eliciting peer review,**
- ❖ **Performing oral storytelling, and**
- ❖ **Designing a story bird and storyboard.**

❖ **Storybird:** It is an extremely engaging collaborative story writing website that embodies three ideas creating, reading, and sharing. It is also a collaborative digital storytelling tool that allows students to focus more on the content of their writing rather than drawing pictures. Students are provided with the pictures free collections of art. They just have to add the words to write stories. Once the art is chosen, students are able to build their story by dragging and dropping pictures and creating/writing a story to match the pictures chosen.

❖ **Storyboard:** It allows the user to organize images, text, motion, interviews and music before they begin making their digital story. It allows the user to visualize how the story will be put together. It also inspires new ideas for the user's digital story because the user sees all of the pieces of the story laid out in front of them.

- **At the beginning of class, the instructor poses certain questions about a topic based on contexts or experiences related to the students' lives and interests in order to encourage participants to consider alternatives and decide upon a topic.**
- **Next, students research the topic for information to write scripts which reflect a logical story or sequence of events.**
- **After completing the scripts, they question each other, engaging in peer critiquing or coaching. Students first practice telling their stories in a traditional manner, which aids in the discovery of details essential to their stories.**
- **Afterward, a story map is designed to illustrate the main components of the story and their relationship to the overall narrative. For instructors, story mapping provides a basis for immediate assessment of students' stories and provides feedback**

on how to improve weaker elements of their stories. In addition, students represent their stories in a storyboard format, arranging the sequence of scenes, effects, and other digital components.

- Each task in this pre-production phase is paper-based, requiring focus on the content rather than multimedia elements. Writing scripts and story treatments is a key process for creating digital stories since the final product is media-based.
3. **Production Stage:** Once all the resources and the storyboard are in place, guided by the formative assessment rubric and a partial script, students begin production work. Students select visual and audio elements of the digital storytelling. If they are creating a video product, they will most likely be working with a slide presentation application. Guided by storyboard and script, students prepare a narration. The researcher acts as mentor, depending on grade level, and assists with activities such as putting the slides in order or timing the slides. Music and sound effects may be employed.
 4. Then, in the post-production phase, the content is arranged and edited into a digital story.
 5. During the distribution phase, students share their comments and digital stories with others. The dynamic process of creating digital stories develops a deeper connection with the subject matter being learned as well as relevant extra-curricular experiences.
 6. **Presentation Stage:** digital storytelling should be saved onto a file sharing site or archived onto a CD . It is played for the classroom or posted to the web. There are many genres of digital stories and digital story making applications. There is classic digital storytelling, and there are photo essays, e-Portfolios, and Weblogs. The researcher present students' writing on Facebook Group and the blog she constructed for this purpose.

Findings of the Study

A . Quantitative Analysis of the findings

The findings of the present research are presented in the light of the hypotheses of the research using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings are stated as follows:

Findings of Hypothesis (1)

The first hypothesis states that "there is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants in EFL narrative skills on the pre-and post- administration of the EFL narrative writing skills test in favor of the post- administration". Table (1) presents the students' mean scores, standard deviations, t - value and level of significance of the pre and post assessment of the study sample in EFL narrative writing skills.

Table (1): "t" test between the mean scores of the study sample in the post assessment of the EFL narrative writing Skills

Skill	Assessment	N	Mean	S.D	T- Value	D.F	Sig.
EFL Narrative Skills	Pre	20	37.850	1.785	25.122	19	0.01
	Post	20	61.550	3.582			

Table (1) shows that the study sample outperformed in the post administration of the overall narrative writing skills, where "t-value" is (25.122) which is significant at the (0.01) level .Thus, the first hypothesis was supported.

Findings of Hypothesis (2)

The second hypothesis states that "there is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants in EFL narrative writing sub-skills on the pre-and post- administration of the EFL narrative writing skills test in favor of the post- administration ". Table (2) presents the students' mean scores, standard deviations, t -value and level of significance of the pre and post assessment of the study sample in EFL narrative sub-skills (i.e. text structure, vocabulary choice, organization, paragraphing, sentence structure, punctuation, conventions).

The second hypothesis is divided into the following sub-hypotheses

- "There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of pre and post administration of the study participants in EFL text structure skill in favor of post administration ".
- "There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of pre and post administration of the study participants in EFL word choice skill in favor of post administration ".
- "There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of pre and post administration of the study participants in EFL Organization skill in favor of post administration ".
- "There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of pre and post administration of the study participants in EFL editing and revising skill in favor of post administration ".
- "There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of pre and post administration of the study participants in EFL Conventions skill in favor of post administration ".

Table (2): "t" test between the mean scores of the study sample in the post assessment of the EFL narrative writing Sub-Skills

Skills	Measurement	N	Mean	S. D.	"T" value	DF	Sig.
Text Structure	Pre	20	6.0500	0.945	9.831	19	0.01
	Post	20	9.950	1.234		19	
Word Choice	Pre	20	5.500	0.759	15.540	19	0.01
	Post	20	10.350	1.226		19	
Organization	Pre	20	9.700	1.689	10.801	19	0.01
	Post	20	15.900	1.804		19	
Editing and Revising	Pre	20	8.500	0.607	5.128	19	0.01
	Post	20	10.450	1.538		19	
Conventions	Pre	20	8.550.	0.686	27.306	19	0.01
	Post	20	10.900	0.788		19	

Thus, table (2) indicated that the study participants were much better in the post application than the pre administration in EFL

narrative writing sub-skills where "t" value is (9.831) for text structure; (15.540) for word choice ; (10.801) for organization ; (5.128) for editing and revising; and (27.306) for conventions which is significant at the (0.01) level of significance .Therefore, the second hypothesis was confirmed.

B . Qualitative Analysis of the findings

At the beginning of the program, the students fear from writing and their writing full of mistakes, no meaning and boring. Moreover, most EFL students hate to write as they have no experience, no confidence, maybe no ideas, a slender vocabulary, skewed grammar and probably vague notion of punctuation. So, students should practice, practice and still more practice to learn writing. They are always hesitant to write because they cannot generate ideas and they are afraid of making mistakes. (Abdel-Hack, 2009:255).

After participating in digital storytelling program, students' narrative writing began to improve. In the interview data, five students had similar positive reaction towards digital storytelling program. They felt that their narrative writing in English developed because they became more confident and were able to organize their writing, use suitable expression and vocabulary. The researcher interviewed six students questions based on the procedures of digital storytelling program. They were asked about the various aspects of the digital storytelling approach and their perceptions of the progress made in narrative writing after the instruction.

To understand how students perceived the importance of digital storytelling in developing narrative writing, some interview questions were asked. An excerpt from the researcher's transcripts provided insight into the students' perception about the activities in digital storytelling program.

Students (1) : In writing narrative essay ,I enjoy using digital storytelling. I think it is very useful and interesting for me. Moreover it is very easy to use. I can understand its procedures while writing.

In addition, students themselves spoke of the importance of organization in their writing pieces. Student (1) when asked during an interview to recall the writing skills that were being taught in the

classroom, he announced that the he was working on narratives. He then proceeded to describe a personal narrative as “a paragraph that he put one, two, and three, and four, stating that those are the events that happen during his narrative.

Student (2): Digital storytelling is very important for improving narrative writing skills. Before participating in digital storytelling, I was anxious and nervous of writing. Now, I become more confident enough and take control of my writing.

According to the student interviews, the proper use of mechanics includes five sub-skills: neat handwriting, correct spelling, knowledge of sentence structure, and the proper use of capitals and punctuation. The Students believe correct spelling is the most important of the five sub-skill.

Students (3): writing narrative essay was hard but it was fun and interesting. The program was good practice to help with narrative writing.

For example, Student (3), when asked which skills are the most important for a writer to have, was quick to reply that the ability to spell and do punctuation. She expressed correct spelling as an important skill because without that a story can't be good and it will be messed up in the spell.

Students (4): I think my narrative writing improve because digital storytelling makes me comfortable with writing activity. I enjoyed using the website because I can practice my English language by telling the story. I can tell my story whenever I want and nobody laugh at me when I say something wrong.

When asked what helps them the most during writing time, student (4) stated learning more words because when she learn a more about words the more words she can use in her writing. She expressed how a larger vocabulary allows for the use of more interesting words to make sentences better

Students (5): It makes me more interested in writing process and activities. Moreover I also have opportunity to think when I tell the story .It is an interesting activity.

Therefore, digital storytelling approach was incorporated with standard process-oriented writing instruction. Then, the students wrote a narrative essay. In addition, when students understand they may gain personal benefits from assignments, they frequently apply themselves more seriously to the tasks. When they have confidence in their ability to learn the material, their willingness to attempt the task is higher and their writing improved.

Discussion of the Results

The primary purpose of this study is to develop EFL narrative writing skills among first year students enrolled in English section at Faculty of Education, Benha University, Egypt through using program based digital storytelling approach. The program included variety of tasks and activities for helping students to enhance their EFL narrative writing skills. The results of the study reveal that, the program proved to be statistically and educationally significant in developing prospective teachers' EFL narrative writing skills.

As a result, students are encouraged for being responsible for their own work, by giving some control over what, how and when they learn. Therefore, they will be able to set realistic goals, plan programs of work, develop strategies for coping with new situations, evaluate and assess their own work. They are able to learn how to learn from their own successes and failures in ways, which will help them to be efficient learners in the future. Through participating in the program, students were given the rights to write freely, choose the topics or activities in writing classes, if they feel under pressure about the deadlines or accuracy of the assignments, if they are provided with enough informative feedback, if they have the opportunity to have an effective and sufficient interaction with the researcher through using different technological tools such as Facebook and blog. Therefore, students enjoy writing and participating in various tasks and activities.

According to organization skills that are one of the major skills emphasized during writing instruction, the participants confirm its importance. At the beginning, the researcher modeled to the participants how to choose appropriate writing topics and organize them. Then, she modeled how she narrowed down her own list of

topics until she had chosen only one to write about. After modeling how to choose a topic, she then guided the students as they narrowed down the ideas on their own lists. She used the modeling strategy to remind students how to properly plan the events, also considered main ideas with added supporting details that they will include in their personal narratives.

Using a graphic organizer that included spaces for the story topic, four events, and supporting event details, she showed the class the proper way to fill in each section using her own story as a guide. The students were then allowed to complete event one, event two, and the supporting detail portions of their graphic organizers. A similar graphic organizer poster was posted on the student's Facebook group, which could be used as a guide if students were in need of some extra help. These steps helped the students to understand the importance of planning a story and how to organize each specific event into a paragraph with supporting details.

Also , they confirm the importance of the mechanics skills as they emphasized during editing/revising stage. The students were having a difficult time reading the sentences placed on the Facebook group due to the lack of proper punctuation, spelling, and capital letters. The students took turns suggesting how to correct misspelled words, add effective punctuation, and replace unnecessary capital letters. It can be concluded that the paragraph was much easier to read after the changes had been made.

While the use of mechanics can make a piece of writing easier to read, the word choice can improve writing quality. Participants of the study indicated that the word choice is a means to improve the quality of a written piece. Therefore, the quality of a writing piece is improved through the use of “better words, otherwise understood to mean more detailed, descriptive vocabulary.

The ability to effectively edit and revise emerged as the most valued skill developed through personal narrative writing instruction. Students find that editing and revising skill is difficult because they can find other peoples' mistakes but they can't go back and find their own mistakes. After participating in the digital storytelling approach, they were observed correcting errors found in

a sample paragraph. They asked the researcher o look over their work for any mistakes. Students stated that without editing and revising skills, their writing do not be good.

Therefore, it is important to help students to be familiar with writing and how it works as a tool of learning and self-expression. Thus, teachers should provide opportunities for students to share their own experiences to develop their confidence in writing. Students should be encouraged to write cohesively and coherently. Learners have to feel motivated and confident that they have something worth communicating. They need to understand that writing is a learning process learnt only by writing and by exploring how language, purpose and meaning are related. It requires some conscious mental efforts, because writers are writing for a reader who is not present, and in some cases may not even be known to them.

Conclusions

The results of the study revealed that the participants' EFL narrative writing skills developed after the implementation of the program based on digital storytelling approach. In addition, they became much more motivated and encourage expressing their own opinions and points of view in writing without fearing from anything. The effectiveness of the digital storytelling approach may be due to the various activities, tasks and strategies the researcher presented to the students.

Using Facebook and blog had a positive impact on the students' learning experience and motivation. Facebook was an innovative and effective tool in a student-centered learning environment that enriched students' educational experiences increased the relevance of the subject matter and encouraged students to collaborate effectively with their peers. From the perspective of the educator, the use of Facebook enhanced the teaching and learning process as it allowed the educator to tap into the digital learning styles of the students and provided innovative ways of involving and motivating students in the learning process. Therefore, the significance differences found in favor of the post assessment of the EFL narrative writing skills can be ascribed to the implementation of the

program based on digital storytelling approach. Thus, the program proved to be effective in developing EFL narrative writing skills among the participants of the study.

Recommendations of the Study

In the light of previous results, the following recommendations could be presented:

- Teachers of English language should be trained on using digital storytelling approach while teaching English to their students in different educational stages.
- English language teacher should emphasize the development of the students' narrative writing skills in the early educational stages to develop them in the following stages.
- Curriculum designers should make use of digital storytelling approach when designing English language courses and overcoming foreign language anxiety.

Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the findings of the present research, the following implications for further research are suggested:-

- Investigating the effectiveness of digital storytelling approach in English language learning among secondary school students.
- Clarifying the influence of digital storytelling approach on other language skills such as listening, speaking and reading.
- Investigating the effectiveness of digital storytelling approach in decreasing students' speaking and writing anxiety.
- Clarifying the effect of using other strategies on developing students' EFL narrative writing skills.

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