



Ain Shams University

Faculty of Education

Curriculum and Instruction Department

**The Effectiveness of a Courseware in the English Language
Based on Narrative Technique to Develop some Critical
Reading Skills for Secondary School Students**

A thesis

Submitted for the Master's Degree in Education

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Prepared by

Ahmed Hamdy Rady Lasheen

Demonstrator in Curriculum and Instruction Department

Faculty of Education – October 6 University

Supervised by:

**Dr. Magdy Mahdy Aly
Professor of EFL Instruction
Faculty of Education
Ain Shams University**

**Dr. Ahmed M. Aboud
Professor of English Literature
Faculty of Education
Ain Shams University**

(2012)



جامعة عين شمس

كلية التربية

قسم المناهج وطرق تدريس

فاعلية برمجية في اللغة الانجليزية

قائمة على الأسلوب القصصي لتنمية بعض مهارات القراءة

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بحث

مقدم للحصول على درجة الماجستير في التربية

تخصص مناهج وطرق التدريس

الباحث

أحمد حمدي راضي لاشين

معيد بقسم المناهج و طرق التدريس
كلية التربية – جامعة 6 أكتوبر

إشراف

الأستاذ الدكتور

أحمد محمد عبود

أستاذ الأدب الانجليزي

كلية التربية – جامعة عين شمس

الأستاذ الدكتور:

مجدي مهدي علي

أستاذ المناهج وطرق التدريس

كلية التربية – جامعة عين شمس

(2012)

Names of supervisors

(1)

Name:

Dr. Magdy Mahdy Aly

Position:

Professor of Curriculum and EFL Instruction

Faculty of Education, Ain Shams University

(2)

Name:

Dr. Ahmed M. Aboud

Position:

Professor of English literature

Faculty of Education, Ain Shams University

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Abstract

The Effectiveness of a Courseware in the English Language based on Narrative Technique to Develop some Critical Reading Skills for Secondary School Students.

Supervised by

Dr. Magdy Mahdy Aly
Professor of EFL Instruction
Faculty of Education
Ain Shams University

Dr. Ahmed M. Aboud
Professor of English Literature
Faculty of Education
Ain Shams University

Prepared by

Ahmed Hamdy Radi Lasheen

Demonstrator in Curriculum and Instruction Department
Faculty of Education – October 6 University

This study aimed at investigating effectiveness of a courseware based on the narrative technique to develop some critical reading skills for first year secondary students. A group of 60 1st year secondary students were randomly chosen from Al Radwa secondary school for language at 6 October educational zone to be the experimental and control group of the study. Students in the experimental group received training through a proposed courseware based on using stories for developing critical reading skills. On the other hand, students in the control group received regular instruction. A pre-posttest was designed to determine the effectiveness of the proposed program used before and after carrying out the experiment. Results provided support for the study hypotheses which stated that using courseware based on stories would develop the experimental group students' critical reading skills. Results showed evidence that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the critical reading post-test in each skill separately and in overall critical reading skills in favor of the experimental group. Results also maintain that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the critical reading pre post-test in each skill separately and overall critical reading skills in favor of the post-test.

Key words: Courseware, Narrative technique, EFL critical reading skills.

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List of Abbreviations

SQ3R : Survey, Question, Read, Recite and Review

DRTA : Directed Reading – Thinking Activity

PRT : Purpose, Relationship and Text

Chapter One

Background & Problem

Chapter One

Background and Problem

Introduction

Technological revolution has changed all aspects of life, and this is asserted through the twenty fifth of January revolution which released by the internet technology (the Facebook). The internet technology has been a revolution for the educational sector as it is an ocean of information; this urged teachers to help their students to be critical readers to be more productive and useful in their lives.

In spite of culture changes and technological revolution, the story still has a huge influence on modern life. When someone says: "let me tell you a story" listeners perk up their ears. Meyer (1997, p.1) states that:

"our lives are made of stories: the stories we tell ourselves for amusement, the stories others tell us for information, the stories we attend to when we wish to understand the world around us. When we very young, stories were read to many of us to teach us and delight us, to give shape and meaning to our world and depth to our ideas and beliefs."

Barnet & others (1993, p. 28) report that people tell stories for many reasons, including two more commendable desires: a desire to entertain or a desire to instruct. The current study aims at using stories as an approach in developing critical reading skills through a designed courseware. According to Fisher (2008, p. 88): "stories are idea for critical and dialogical enquiry and as a way into the criticism both of narrative and of cultural forms".

Educators can use stories to solve many educational and social problems. Lynch-Brown & others (2011, p. 5) declare that: "Literature for children leads to personal fulfillment and academic gains". Teachers and parents can use stories to encourage students to think and read critically. Anderson (2005, p. 17) refers that through studying literature, we can take steps to enhance critical reading and evaluation. We can read simply to gather impressions and we can read actively, asking questions and making notes about what we study. Reading analytically helps us to identify the details of passage. We sometimes read to synthesize information, drawing connections and making comparisons.

Critical reading refers to interpreting any written text with both a literal and figurative perspective. If readers are not reading critically, they are simply able to repeat obvious facts that are presented on the surface. Critical reading, however, requires the reader to dig much deeper than surface meaning in order to find key elements of the text. Critical reading is conceptualized as a process of evaluating the authority and validity of material and of formulating an opinion about it. Mohammed (2002, p.32) refers that: One of the major responsibilities of today's teachers is teaching reading as a thinking process, teaching children to think as they read. At each educational level, thinking must be included to help students in making judgments and drawing conclusions.

Shahin (2008, p. 88-89) indicates that using stories in the classroom is a necessary condition for learning and considers the content base for thinking. It can provide sense of enjoyment, excitement, and emotional involvement in what is read. The best way to develop the brains capacity for critical thought is to stimulate them with appropriately challenging problems and experience. Stories have an important effect on the development of critical thinking as readers engage in critical thought to

get the meaning of what they read. Studying literature teaches us fundamental skills for becoming critical thinkers and good writers.

Multimedia plays an important role in promoting critical reading skills through motivation. Barron & Orwig, (1997, p.6) states that: "one student may be an audio learner and benefit most when instruction is delivered through sound and narration". Lynch-Brown & others (2011, p.260-262) explained the relationship between technology and literature that the use of electronic devices enables users to read, write, communicate, gather and share information makes technological development a topic worthy of attention by teachers. Various interactive programs assist students in brain storming, mapping, writing, and editing their critical responses to literature. For example, interactive electronic white boards, such as smart board allow instructors to add interest and depth to their lessons by accessing photographs, drawing, maps, videos and audio clips, and related sources of information.

Apparently, Bastaurous, (2004, p. 43) confirms that the best way to help students to read effectively is to introduce reading text through multimedia. To be effective, a text must maintain the content as its primary focus while actively engaging readers. When student motivation is high, reading achievement tends to be high as well. Designed computer programs allow the opportunity to provide interactive practice, and reinforce learning with appropriate feedback; this can be done through the features that are represented by multimedia computer programs. The time saving process speeds up students reading pace and thus allows more time for total comprehension. In sum, computer provides graphics, color, animation and it reduces the complexity of the teacher's task when they are trying to conduct a reading class with the students.

Context of the problem

Previous research on reading comprehension in secondary schools revealed that students produce words and sentences that are directly stated in the passage as they respond to the question in their book. According to Kirsznner & Mandell (2007, p. 3): "most of time, readers are passive, they expect the text to give them everything they need, and they don't accept to contribute much to the reading process. In contrast, active reading means participating in the reading process: thinking about what you read, asking questions and challenging ideas". The present study aims at motivating students through using a courseware based on narratives to help students to be critical readers.

The researcher observed that some teachers are not aware of the importance of critical teaching on the contrary of the advanced countries as in the United States. Knoblauch & Brannon (1993, p. 6) state the goals of critical teaching, which presumes that:

"American citizens [and citizens of many other countries] should understand, accept, and live amicably amidst the realities of culture diversity – long axes of gender, race, class, and ethnicity – that are the hall marks of ... society. It presumes that people are entitled to fairness in their social and economic lives. It presumes that a critical citizenry, willing as well as able to take responsibility for the nation's future, is preferable to a passive, unengaged citizenry that lets government, business, and mass media do its thinking. Finally, it presumes that no one group is exclusively entitled to the privilege of representation, but that each has a right to tell its story, critique other stories, and participate in forming a community responsive to the needs of all its members."

Mohammed (2002, p. 9) confirms that: "reading in general and critical reading in particular are not given an adequate consideration in our secondary schools. Most teachers ask their students to pay attention to