The impact of storytelling on social skills

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Abstract: The aim of this study was to determine the effect of storytelling on increasing the social skills. The studying population consisted of all fifth grade boy students of primary schools in fifth region of Tehran in the educational year of 1391 – 1392. A population of 60 students has been selected via a simple random sampling among students who had social skills below the average level and 30 students were replaced in experimental group and the remainder of them went to control group. First, groups completed the surveys (social skilss of Gresham and Elliott (1990)), then in experimental group the independent variable (8 stories during eight 90 minutes sessions) was performed, but control group received no training. After the intervention on the post – test for both groups (experimealnt and control) the dependent variable (social skills of Gresham and Elliott (1990)) was executed and one mounth after the post – test stage in the tracing stage the dependent variable (social skills of Gresham and Elliott (1990)) was conducted only on experimental group. To test the hypothesis the covariance and repetitive mesurment test were used. While approving the hypothesis of the study, the results of this investigation showed that the storyteeling method not only increases the social skills of elementary school students in Tehran but these skills also have good stability over time.

Keywords: storytelling, social skills, students.

Introduction

Children's social problems lead them to a veraity of behavioral disorders and even affect on their attitudes toward school classmates and the educational functionality (Brenner 1990). Children in their growth process which is a complex process with high fluctuations are faced with the harsh environment surrounding them.

And in this process, which is actually a kind of learning, they define intelligence and the adoption of new materials with the daily situations.Unfortunately in today's living which is influenced by environment and the diversity of technology and social conditions, children are far from constructive amd live relationships with their parents and are deprived of live relations. Our era is time of electronic communication, a time in which most of the free time of children is spent to play computer games in front of inorganic electronic screens that has taken place in any living creatures (Mattson, 2003).

Early recognition and proper social skills training for children can prevent future problems and could lead them towards positive social behaviors. One of the ways that is very effective in teaching social skills to children is storytelling. Storytelling as a viable and productive activity is intended to remind us of something forgotten. Storytelling reminds us memories of a forgotten world that are within our own mind and have given some part of our mind. Its presence is a nostalgic one. But storytelling is determined to make possible this access and is going to re – find and re – create this world (Dadgaran,

1376). Story is a rich source, a creative, easy and enjoyable method and tool to teach (Dyjourge, 1988).The child can analyse the consequences of behavior through the surrogate experiment with the hero and then modele and use it (Mattson et al, 2003). Children live in a world of stories, they paly with the story, wake up and sleep with it. Even they follow the stories in the world of sleeping. This attachment is such a way that even the most naughty children also listen quietly to story, on the other hand children learn many things from listenng to stories (Rahmandoust, 1369). They learn things that maybe in other circumnstances they do not have any interest in learning them. Moreover, storytelling is the simplest, cheapest and most effective means that its playing is possible for all and even the families can run it, because it does not need any instrument and preliminary (Plowsky, 1372).

So storytelling plays an important role in children's lives and on the other hand it is a tool which is in hand without cost. Therefore, its use for children's growth and well being is effective, simple and affordable. However, the reality shows that today this educational tool is neglected in most cases. Then one can venture to say that the storytelling utility is one of the indirect training devices which can be used in country's educational system, specially in order to teach social skills to children. Social skills are defined as observable and measurable behavaiors which improve independence, acceptability and desired quality of life (Kartlej, 1369). Social skills can be tought at any age and children should be thought well

the importance of using effective social skills. Many children with their special behaviors are in need of continous education in social skills and children with these conditions can modify their behavior with social skills training and prepare themselves to deal with their problems (Gynat, 1369). Children should learn different social skills to adopt themselves more with the community in which they live. These skills include a wide range of capabilities from the beginngin to the end of a simple conversation to recognize the symptoms of social relationships and the most complex of them such as process of problem solving and conflict. Since one of the most important objectives of officials and educational planners is development of children's talents through educational programs and on the other hand the future state of the country is related to their success in educational affairs and since the social adjustment of children with regard to education is very important, the concentration is on the use of best methods, especially effective strategies for behavioral changes in childrens towards proper social skills to access the noble goals of education. Childhood years are suitable time for diagnosis of children disorders, early intervention and prevention of their social, educational and emotional problems in the future. In fact, timely and early intervention and modification of maladaptive behaviors of children in this critical period not only increase social skills and popularity among peers and adults but also prepare a child to accept the future responsibilities (Shahym, 1386). Social skill has a fundamental relation with all aspects of children lives and influence on their adaptation. The importance of social skills as the most important factor in socialization and social adaptation will never be ignored. Paying attention to social development and social upbringing as well as other aspects of development and educational dimensions enjoys a special place.

"Socialization is the most important process of acquiring social skills in children wihich is influenced by different levels of ecological impacts including family, school and society. Children's social skills can affect dramatically on adaptive and educational functionality and quality of life and their potential power for life and education in the environment with the least restrictions "(Shahi et al, 1387).

Generally speaking, children and teenagers are not interested to participate in therapy sessions, but they love story and enjoy listening it, in particular boys who seem to rely on the story. Also Gurain (1997) believes that since boys experience a sense of inadequacy in the emotional field, they need stories to gift them an internal – reflecting language for emotional experiences. On the other hand, because children have some incapability to understand and

express empathy and have more defensive manner, storytelling can be useful in the development of children's social skills. " Those children who have acquires enough social skills, are more successful in making relation with peers (Asher and Tylor, 2001) and learning in teaching environment (Walker and Hopes, 2003) than children who lack these skills. Longitudinal studies indicate a negative effect of social skills failure on mental health of children. "Social skills help children to have an effective relation with others. Most children learn this skill in relation with others without attempt." (Powless and Elliot, 2001)

Poorness in social skills is a predicator of later behavioral problems in children (Parker and Asher quoting Dodge, 1993). On the other hand effective methods in children teaching are indirect ways such as using the art methods. "In this regard, the importance and charm of storytelling for children is mentioned in different contexts and from the perspective of great experts" (Vali, 1386).Pundits believe that storytelling is to create learning situations. "Storytelling makes it possible for a person to think more of his/her personal experiences and to develop creative ways to solve his/her problems" (Butcher, 2006). Various researchs show educational value of storytelling. (Bock, 2006). Interest in story among children and teenagers is far greater than adults. Plato is the first thinkers who have realized the importance of story for children and adolescents. Educatonal stories which help children and adolescents to live better."Adolescents with substitution themselves in place of hero reach to a shuch important achievement in terms of educational issue (Dobie, 2007).

In the process of storytelling, audiences are allowed to intervene and protest; they see storyteller closely and allow themselves to cut his / her words and present themselves with asking questions and expressing memories. And they can complete their data, follow the unknowns and understand the hidden parts of story and therefore they can feel better the story on their inside.This possibility does not exist in theatre, film, TV series and computer games and the kids and adolescents are passive in these programs and are on the other side of the program.while in the storytelling program things are different and children and adolescent motivate their desire and enthusiasm with protest, involvement and approval to participate in the progam and thereby step to develop their talents and creative power as well as increase their imagination power. Also when retelling the story, kids and adolescents and take advantage of their internal capabilities. They reach to a kind of crativitty and self-confidence while changing the story events and converting them to their desire scene (Alaxander, 1994)**.**

Regarding to the importance of social skills and their impact on all aspects of students' lif and adoption an appropriate and effective manner, yet attractive and flexible to enhance these skills, the aim of this study is to follow the question of "whether storytelling has impact on increasing social skills of students or not?"

Research objectives
The overall goal

To determine the effect of storytelling on increasing the social skills of students

Secondary objectives
1- To determine the storyteeling effect on increasing social skills (cooperation, courage and self – control abilities) in students
2- To determine the stability effect of storytelling on increasing the social skills over time

Research hypothesis:
1- Storytelling affect on rising the social skills of students
2- Storytelling enjoys a suitable stability over time to increase the social skills of students

Methodology
The methodology of this study is a semi – experimental pretest-posttest with control group and the pending phase. Statistics population of this study consist of all fifth grade boy students of primary school in fifth region of Tehran in 1391.

Sample size of 60 subjects was determined using Cochran formula and the simple rsndom sampling method. After running the social skills questionnaire on all fifth grade students of fifth region of Tehra, those whose social skills level was below the average level is determined and among them 60 person was chosen randomely and 30 patients were replaced in the experimental group and 30 ones in control group.

Research instrument for pretest and posttest was the Gresham and Elliot's social skills questionnaire (1990). This questionnaire contains 48 five items questions in 3 subscales (cooperation, courage, and self-contrlo). Reliability coefficient of the questionnaire has been reported about 90 percent using Crunbach alpha coefficient by Gresham and Elliot. Also the experimental group was expodes to the independent variable (storytelling). Storytelling sessions was performed in eight 90 minutes sessions. In this study the collection of intellectual stories by Flip Cam and its training manual have been used as educational content. Intellectual stories are those which encourage children to ask and discuss their questions on a variety of topics.

Table 1 – storytelling protocol based on intellectual stories by Flip Cam

Sessions	stories	objectives
1	Your house or mine	familarity with the concept of trust, ugly or beautiful, cooperation, courage
2	Bird's nest	time management, luck, courage
3	Tommy and turtle time	getting familiar with the concept of stealing, fairness and self-control
4	A night under the stars	Familiarity with development, feelings and self-control
5	knif	Getting familiar with emotions, self confidence, self-control
6	Linda and Clara	familarity with the concept of development, emotion and familiarity with standard concepts
7	ecosystems	Familiarity with animal's house, nature, familarity with the concept of objection
8	Gabriel	familiarity with a variety of emotions, self-esteem

As it is indicated in the following research table, at the pretest and posttest the dependent variable (social skills questionnaire) was performed on each of two groups (experimental and control) and independent variable (storytelling sessions) was performed only on the experimental groupans. And a month later after the posttest phase the dependent variable was performed again on the experimental group in the following stage.

Table 2 - Pre-test - post-test design with control group and follow up stage

Stage group	Pretest phase	Independent variable	Posttest phase	Follow up phase
Experimental test group	T_{a1}	T_a	x	T_0
Control test group	-	T_a	-	T_b

Appropriate statical test, grouped analysis of covariance and repeted mesurments test, was used to analyze data.

Results

Regarding to the nature of hypothesis appropriate statical test, grouped analysis of covariance and repeted mesurments test, was used to analyse data. First let us report the results of Levin's test about variances equality prehypothesis.

Table 3- Test results of Levine's test on the assumption of equal variances of subjects' scores

Variable index	Coefficient F	Coefficient p
cooperation	0.856	0.77
Courage	2.08	0.154
Self-contrlo ,self -discipline	0.527	0.648
Social skills	6.067	0.358

The results of tale 3 show that in the research variables the value of F is not significant at the level of 0.05, thus the hypotheis of equality of variances is confirmed. Also with the satisfaction of other assumptions (linearity and homogenous preassumption of variables's slop) one can use the covariance analysis test to analyze data.
Hypothesis 1: the storytelling method affects on increasing the students's social skills.

Table 4 – the results of covariance analysis of storytelling method effect on increasing the social skills of primary school students

variable	Sum of squares SS	Degree of freedom df	Mean squares MS	Coefficient F	significance	squares	Statistical power
Pretest Cooperation	108.093	1	108.093	269.	606.	005.	080.
Group	3895.505	1	3895.505	1813.245	000.	970.	1.000
Error	120.308	57	2.148				
total	37392.000	60					
Pretest courage	200.214	1	200.214	0.540	0.121	102.	209.
Group	8719.656	1	8719.656	3130.134	000.	982.	1.000
Error	158.786	57	2.786				
total	84350.000	60					
Pretest Self-contrl, self-discipline	119.754	1	119.754	0.553	0.630	327.	011.
Group	3706.010	1	3706.010	2097.477	000.	974.	1.000
Error	100.713	57	1.767				
total	36944.000	60					
Pretest Social skills	756.712	1	756.712	1.305	000.	189.	314.
Group	38494.217	1	38494.217	6323.429	000.	991.	1.000
Error	340.903	57	6.088				
total	453751.000	60					

Based on the results of covariance analysis and information of table 4, the effects of storytelling method on social skills, and its subscales among the subjects for cooperation (4/1813 = F and 001/0 = P) , for courage (13/3130 = F and 001/0 = P) for self-control , self-descipline (4/2097 = F and 001/0 = P) and for social skills (4/6323 = F and 001/0 = P) significant staitically.(0. 05 < P). According to the above evidence, the results indicate that the storytelling approach is to enhance the social skills of students.
Second hypothesis: storytelling techniques to enhance the social skills of students also has a good stability over time. Using frequent measurement test, resulted changes in social skills and subscales of the experimental group, pretest, post-test, and follow up were analyzed to assess the stability of results over time.

Table 5 - Comparison of social skills average changes of experimental group at pre-test, post-test and follow up phases

variable	Experimental group					
	Pre-test		Post-test		Follow up	
	$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD
Cooperarion	13.97	1.54	31.77	1.52	35.41	1.72
courage	20.57	1.89	47.70	1.91	52.17	2.98
Self-contrlo, self- discipline	13.93	1.55	31.37	1.45	34.59	2.03
Social-skills	48.47	2.00	110.83	2.89	110.90	3.35

According to table 5, there is a considerable difference between the average of social skills scores and its subscales (cooperation, courage, selfcontrlo ans and self-discipline) among experimental group in pre-test and post-test and follow up phases. In order to test the significance of difference between experimental and control groups on the dependent variablaes (social skills and its subscales (cooperation, courage, self-contrlo and self-discipline)) the multivariable analysis of variance hea been used to control the effect of pre-test.

Table 6 – multivariable analysis of variance to check the effect of group variable on the subscales of social skills

Index variable	Test name	value	The hypothesis of DF	Mistake of DF	Rate of F	Significance level
Cooperation	The tset of Pilaye effect	991.	1.454	2.000	27	000.
	Wilks Lambda test	009.	1.454	2.000	27	000.
	The test of Hotelling effect	107.716	1.454	2.000	27	000.
	The test of largest roop on	107.716	1.454	2.000	27	000.
courage	The tset of Pilaye effect	994.	2.202	2.000	27	000.
	Wilks Lambda test	006.	2.202	2.000	27	000.
	The test of Hotelling effect	163.129	2.202	2.000	27	000.
	The test of largest roop on	163.129	2.202	2.000	27	000.
Self-contrlo, self-discipline	The tset of Pilaye effect	993.	1.821	2.000	27	000.
	Wilks Lambda test	007.	1.821	2.000	27	000.
	The test of Hotelling effect	134.862	1.821	2.000	27	000.
	The test of largest roop on	134.862	1.821	2.000	27	000.
Social skills	The tset of Pilaye effect	997.	5.37	2.000	28	000.
	Wilks Lambda test	003.	5.37	2.000	28	000.
	The test of Hotelling effect	383.562	5.37	2.000	28	000.
	The test of largest roop on	383.562	5.37	2.000	28	000.

As can be seen in table 6, the values of F (27 and 28) in the level of P>0.001 are statistically significant. Thus it can be said that there is a significant difference between students in experimental group and control group on dependent variables (social skills and its subscales (cooperation, courage, self-contrlo and self-discipline)).

Table 7: the results of Kroyt Muchly test on dependent variables

Index variable	Muchly	Xi 2	df	p	Test		
					Green house Gaser	Hovine-Foldet	Lower bound
Cooperation	975.	673.	2	714.	976.	1.000	500.
courage	878.	3.510	2	173.	891.	948.	500.
Self-contrlo,self-discipline	827.	5.135	2	077.	852.	902.	500.
Social skills	943.	1.630	2	443.	946.	1.000	500.

As it can be seen in table 7, Kroyt test shows that the observed data measured at different stages (pre-test, post-test and follow) and dependent variables (social skills and its subscales (cooperation, courage, self-control and self-discipline) are not the same in level 0.05> P.

Table 8 - Results of effects test among subjects

Index Component variable		Sum of squares y	df	Mean square	F	significance
cooperation	Kroyt assumption	7698.414	2	3849.207	1.744	000.
	Green house Gaser	7698.414	1.952	3944.032	1.744	000.
	Hovine-Foldet	7698.414	2.000	3849.207	1.744	000.
	Lower bound	7698.414	1.000	7698.414	1.744	000.
courage	Kroyt assumption	16891.678	2	8445.839	1.754	000.
	Green house Gaser	16891.678	1.783	9475.448	1.754	000.
	Hovine-Foldet	16891.678	1.896	8910.970	1.754	000.
	Lower bound	16891.678	1.000	16891.678	1.754	000.
Self-contrlo, self-discipline	Kroyt assumption	7147.609	2	3573.805	1.184	000.
	Green house Gaser	7147.609	1.705	4192.759	1.184	000.
	Hovine-Foldet	7147.609	1.804	3961.994	1.184	000.
	Lower bound	7147.609	1.000	7147.609	1.184	000.
Social skills	Kroyt assumption	77875.267	2	38937.633	5.692	000.
	Green house Gaser	77875.267	1.893	41139.157	5.692	000.
	Hovine-Foldet	77875.267	2.000	38937.633	5.692	000.
	Lower bound	77875.267	1.000	77875.267	5.692	000.

Results of table 8 show that the variations of dependent variables are smaller than the level $0.005 > P$. Therefore it can be concluded that the storytelling method to enhance the social skills of students has a good stablity over time.

Discussion and conclusion

In comparative comparision about storytelling method to enhance social skills and the stability of this training it is necessary to note that based on suitable considerations on effectiveness of storytelling method to enhance social skills independent research has not been done so far. But the findings of this study is consistent with the investigations of local researchers such as Rezaei et al (1390), Momayezi et al (1390), Sharifi e Daramadi (1390), Nasirzadeh and Roshan (1389), Zakariaei et al (1387), Homaei et al (1388) and / or foreign researchers such as Auerbach et al (2010), Matsuura et al (2009), Lento (2007), Teglassi and Rthman (2001) and Shatman and also is approved by their results.

Researchers and investigators concluded that this storytelling not only enhances the social skills and social consistency but also increase positive behaviors among individuals. On the other hand storytelling affects on their signs of impairment in social skills and reduces the behavioral disorders such as aggression. Some of these researchers have also suggested that the effects of these results had a suitable stability. Findings of Momayezi et al (1390) showed that that antisocial behaviors and lack of suitable social skills is effective in two-way relationships of child and adolescent with others.The results of Sharifi Daramadi's study (1390) found that social skills training was significantly more effective to improve the consistency of students in the experimental group. Social skills training of MichenBaum (1977) led to increase consistency of blind students and caused to reduce symptoms of their impaired social skills. The finding of Nasirzadeh and Roshan (1389) showed that storytelling has reduced the symptoms of aggression among children. This reduction also remains stable in three months follow up. The results of this study showed that these findings prove the capability of using story and its structure in the children education and solving their problems. Homaei et al (1388) showed that ther is a significant difference between the average of six consistency fields of children in experimentral and control groups, in terms of the effect of storytelling on their behavior. Zakariaei et al (1387) showed that using storytelling and creative drama increased creativity of students and also the storytelling method led to increase the flexibility, innovative and expansion scores of students. Vali (1386) studied the topic of " storytelling, an effective method in teaching the complex concepts of medical science". The results showed that the effect of storytelling on increasing the students knowledge was more than the normal speech. Different studies show the effectiveness of story and storytelling in reducing behavioral problems and increasing the positive behaviors in children.Auberich et al (2010) in their study showed that those students with social skills react better at dealing with emotional situations. Matsara (2009) in a research showed the effects of storytelling therapy on aggressive and maladaptive problems and reduction of beliefs that reinforce this behavior.Randy and Michelle (2008) have pointed out in their research that storytelling training has a

positive effect on social adaptation and social skills increment. Linta (2007) after three months of storytelling for children who were more isolated and reclusive than normal children, showed that storytelling is effective in increasing children's self-esteem.in explaining the results of the present study one can acknowledge that some scholars such as Jerome Bruner, Lax and Thiese and Jackswan also know storytelling as a natural way to create the world. In this perspective presentation of moral lessons in story framework to organize learnings in life is expressed. Thus, if stories containe the actions and their consequences, they can cause moral development (Trizenberg, Mc Grath, 2001). Among the activities that can be undertaken without any problem in education system, and can be responsible of raising a child, and collects things like a unit ring around itself is the storytelling activity. Because of innate human need, story is always a favorite programe for children. In this point of view, the importance of story in social and moral development has been discussed by many authors. Therefore storytelling and listening to stories was always one of the most important and most common ways of conveying concepts, transmission of values, behavior modification, enhancement of creativity, encourage curiosity, social interaction and behavior modification and even the transfer of experience and the entertainment (Zaypes,1380).

The story or tale is defined as a text which an author presents his/her idea in it via a story. Whether the story is a wrong fiction or is the reality which is decorated with the imagination and dream (Nurahnar, 1358) it can help individual to coherent and integrate his / her imaginations, events and dreams in a whole and leads to promote individual self-awareness (Kestenbaum 2003, quoted by Sheibani, Yusefi Luyeh and Delavar, 1385). Fiction books and stories can be used to address a wide range of isuuses such as: supporting behaviours, fear of loneliness, secrets and relationships and somethings like that. The results of this study revealed that storytelling method is able to increase the students'social skills. It seems that social skills subject and it's strengthen among children and students in primary school and development ages is one of variables which has attracted great interest in recent years in the field of children psychology and personality. Social skills are those skills which allow an individual to statrt and continoue positive interactions with others and include skills such as communication, problem solving, decision making, self-management, and relationships with peers. On the other hand, social skil is a set of learned behaviours that enable an individual to communicate effectively with others and avoid unwise reactions. Cooperation, partnership with others, help, initiating a relationship, seek help, compliment others and saying thank you

are examples of such a behavior. Learning these behaviours and developing effective relationship with others is one of the most important achievements of childhood period. In making relation with peers those children who have acquired enough social skills are more successful than those lack these skills.

Conducted researches suggest the negative effect of social skills defect on children's mental health (Cont et al, 2000). Social skill helps children to have an effective relationship with others. Most children learn this skill from relatives (parents, sisters, brothers and peers) without any attempt. For this reson, most of these children face with negative reactions from adults and other children (Slabi and Govara, 2003). Social skill is defined as an ability to interact with others in a particular social context, so that it is acceptable and valuabale in the perpective of tradition. Several studies have shown that there are many factors that influence social skills among students.

Therefore, studying social skills and identifying relatae and effective factor on them among children are very important. On the other hand, increase of adaptability of people has effective and useful consequences on their daily life; of these consequences one can refer to the following:First of all, this skill leads to better interaction between family members and secondly, at the level of society and particularly among peers in the school increase communication and consistency quality. Therefore the healthy relations level increase and indirectly affect on the life quality in adulthood and finally have a desired and constructive influence on their interaction manner in the society. The results of this studt also confirmed this point that one of the factors that have an important influence on social skills and lead to its improvement and enhancement is the use of storytrlling techniques and method.

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