Storyline Approach as Enhancement of Learning Foreign Language and Character Building at Elementary School

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Abstract

Using stories in teaching foreign language, it forces the teacher to be crative and innovative to encourage the young learners to enjoy reading stories. The teacher has to be smart to select which one approach can enhance learning foreign language process and also can support character building of the students. Character education at schools is a vital need for giving the next generation basic skills that not only can make them as life-long learners in this global era, but also make them function in this world. Elementary school becomes the base of character building in formal education level so that charcter education get a lot of attention in every subject. One of approaches that can be implemented to fulfill the condition in teaching foreign language in Elementary Schools in Indonesia is storyline approach. The approach (Storyline) was mainly developed in 1967 by a team of teachers from Jordanhill College of Education (now known as University of Strathclyde) in Glasgow, Scotland. The primary schools in Scotland use a curriculum that involves integration of new topics, such as environmental studies and expressive arts, in their teaching foreign language process. This research focuses on how teaching learning English and character education are developed in SDNBI kota Semarang through storyline approach. The method of the research was qualitative in which data were in the form of interaction transcript between students ant teacher. The data would be interpreted qualitatively. Meanwhile the data were gathered through interview, observation, and note-taking.

Keywords: storyline approach, teaching foreign language, character building

Introduction

Learning a foreign language could be frustrating for some young learners; however, integrating interesting and fun activities in learning would encourage them to develop positive attitudes towards learning a language (Ellis & Brewster, 2002). Actually, there are many methods or techniques how to teach a foreign language to young learners at elementary schools. One of them is using stories. They are an effective and enthusiastic technique in teaching young learners; they inject lots of amusement and help children enjoy learning foreign language in purposeful communication. Wright (1997) & Garvie (1990) as quoted by Cameron (2001:160) said that "Stories are frequently claimed to bring many benefits to young learner classrooms, including language development". Related to the previous statement, Vernon states "Stories are perfect for teaching young ESL students because children already love stories and are already motivated at the thought of listening to one. And when children listen to stories, they're able to internalize the language structure."

Using Stories in Teaching Foreign Language to Young learners

Teaching a foreign language to young learners is different from teaching adults; it is definitely not easier but it is more challenging and interesting. The Critical Period Hypothesis suggests that early exposure of the target language is different from later stages that young learners learn a foreign language better than adults (Cameron, 2001). He differentiates young learners from adults as follow:

1. "Children are often more enthusiastic and lively as learners",
2. "they also lose interest more quickly and are less able to keep themselves motivated on tasks they find difficult",
3. "they do not have the same access as older learners to meta-language that teachers can use to explain about grammar or discourse",
4. and "seem less embarrassed than adults at talking in a new language".

Stories has specific characteristics that are optimum choice   for learning a foreign language. According to Cameron (2001:161). It evolves certain language structure that can be read by children. Some features of stories are 1) Opening, 2) Introduction of characters, 3). Description of the setting, 4) Introduction of a problem, 5) A series of events, 6) The resolution of the problem, 8) A closing, dan 9) A moral. Moreover, stories has language components, such as   1) parallelism, 2) Rich vocabulary, 3) Alliteration, 4) Contrast, 5) Methapor, 6) Intertextuality, 7) Narrative/dialogue, dan 8) Quality in Stories.   It is supported by Slattery dan Willis (2003:96); firstly, stories can be told with pictures and gestures to help children understand; Secondly, stories help children enjoy learning English; Thirdly, stories introduce new language in context; Forth, stories help children revise language they are familiar with ; Fifth, stories help children become aware of the structures of the language; Sixth, stories help children acquire intonation and pronunciation by listening; Seventh, stories can help bring English into other subjects;   Eighth, stories can lead on to lots of activities using listening, speaking, reading and writting.

Moreover, stories can help young learners develop those language skills necessary for success. But implementing an effective approach depends, to a large extent, on children having access to reading materials that are relevant to their own needs and interests, being encouraged to participate in carefully structured activities, and being given incentives to promote reading. The teacher has to be smart to select which one approaches or methods which can enhance learning

foreign language and character building in the teaching foreign language process. One of them is storyline approach. This article delivers about what storyline is and how storyline process to enhance learning foreign language and character building to young learners.

The Storyline Approach
As the mention in abstract that the storyline approach is specifically designed for the use at primary schools. An innovative approach to curriulum integration is the Storyline Method. This method creates a context for curriculum linkage through a topic study called the Storyline. The essential elements of the Storyline topic are setting, characters and events. The unfolding narrative provides a structure and logic to curricula connections. It is random in a topic web whereas the sequence of the investigations is all important in the Storyline Method. Each Storyline episode is dependent on the preceding one. It is random in a topic web whereas the sequence of the investigation is all important in the Storyline Method. Each Storyline episode is dependent on the preceding one. The following diagram adapted from an illustration created by Mr. Ian Barr, provides a graphic explanation of the Space Abduction Topic Study using the Storying Method.

Figure 1. *Topic Line*
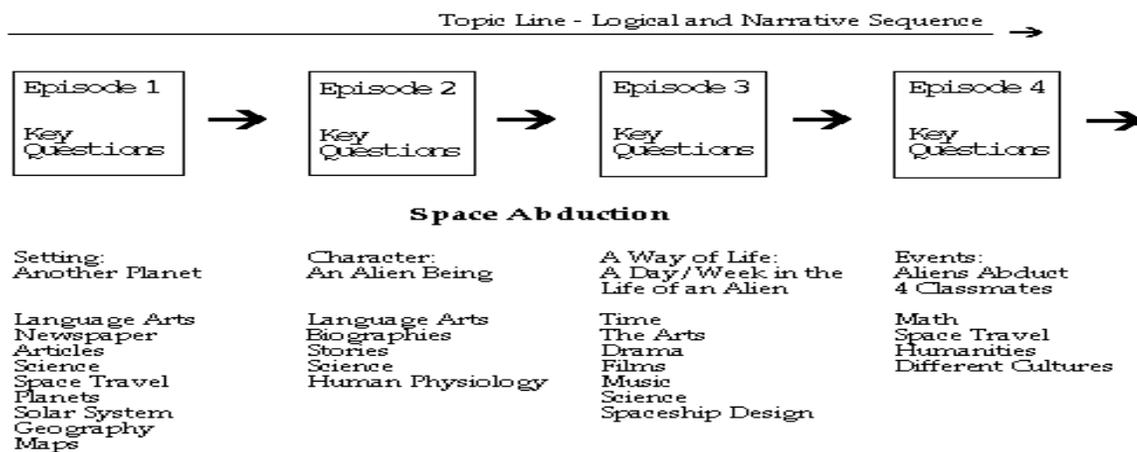
Adapted from the topic study diagram as illustrated by Mr. Ian Barr, Director, Curriculum and Evaluations, Glasgow, Scotland (http://www.storyline.org/history/index.html)

Moreover, Bell (1988) suggested that in the Storyline, 'Unsere Schule' (see below), the students are responsible for creating the characters who attend, decide on the incidents leading up to the open evening, the visiting judge and the final outcome. The teacher provides the outline of the Storyline and plans the skills practice bearing in mind the cognitive challenge inherent in the tasks prepared. Decisions will be based on the time available i.e. number of lessons; the organisation of the students i.e. whole class/pair/group/individual work; the lexis and structures to be taught, practised or recycled; the course book and other resources. However, through 'choice' e.g. the characters and incidents created and the use of 'key questions', students are given some ownership of their learning. Monitoring students' work during the Storyline emphasizes the competent use of dictionaries and students are encouraged to make use of, add to,

create and refer to their own word banks as they progress through the Storyline.Whilst a number of formative assessment opportunities are possible there is no reason why a Storyline cannot be used for summative and peer assessment purposes.

The following is a suggested Storyline presented as an end of unit activity.

Figure 2: *Unsere Schule*

Storyline	Key questions	Teacher Activity	Student Activity	Material	Outcome/Assessment	Skill
School subjects	Warming up:	Organise revision – 'running dictation' game Teacher asks questions Facilitates and monitors	Students in groups copying Whole class activity Individuals read students profiles write profiles	Authentic timetables with school subjects Flashcards, OHT Students profiles from another group/ Germany.	Complete the timetables given Read and respond to questions, gap filling Complete the timetables given Read and respond to questions, gap filling Students write school profiles for: celebrity etc. to be displayed	Writing (Listening, Speaking) Reading and Writing (Listening, Speaking)

Principles of the Storyline Method in Enhancement of Learning Foreign Language

In the teaching process, there are some principles that teachers need to keep in mind. It is necessary to demonstrate that   principles of storyline method are not fulfilled only by using a course book, but also by using the storyline methodology. Below is an outline of these principles:

The Principle of Story
Story is a central part of human experience. Our history, our religioun, out heritage have all been passed from generation to generation through stories for thousands of years. When we seek to understand the world around us or the culture of a people, we look to stories to enlighten us. Stories provide children with a predictable, linear structure and a meningful context for learning what we are trying to teach.

The Principle of Anticipation

A good story draws us into its spell as we predict what is coming and we anticipate its unfolding with joy and excitement. All children want to know, ":What's going to happen next?" They follow the story from episode to episode, eager to see where it will go. Anticipation is also present at the end of a story when children ask, " What is the next story going to be about?" Anticipation ensures that learning goes on all the time whether in school or at home because children are involved in a process that they feel a part of. They are thinking about the story all the time and bringing their thoughts and ideas with them to each class session eager to contribute to the growing story unfolding around them.

The Principle of the Teacher's Rope

This principle refers to the critical partnership between teacher and student in a Storyline topic. The Storyline method is also reffered to as collaborative storymaking because of the balance between teacher control and student control. The teacher at all times holds the rope which is the actual "storyline" planned to include specific curricular goals. The magic of a rope is that it is flexible and allows for numerous bends and twists and knots while moving from one end to the other. This gives children their control. Still, the rope is the road that is being traveled and, in spite of the unexpected detours and diversions, the children still follow the path the teacher designed and learn the curriculum the teacer had planned.

The Principle of Ownership

This is surely the most powerful motivator for children. Children feel responsibility, pride and enthuasiasm for projects in which they play a substantive role. Storyline honors children by beginning with the key question " What is a.........?" or "What do you think a......... is like?" This idea of starting by building the children's conceptual model first says that children are not empty vessels waiting to be filled.

The Principle of Context

This principle is closely linked to the principle of story. New learning must be linked to previous knowledge. Children build their understanding by going from the known to the unknown. Context provides children the reason for learning what we want them to learn. Since a Storyline topic mirrors real life, the context is familiar and children see its relationship to their own lives. The linear, predictable structure of the story is also a context they understand. Children research, practice skills, and assimilate new knowledge because the story demands it and because they care about it.

The Structure Before Activity Principle

Before asking children to build their conceptual model we want to make sure that we have given them the chance to push their prior knowledge to its edges. When they have reached this point we know that they will frame their own questions and go about trying to find the answers. Children need to discover what they don't know by articulating what they do know and seeing the gaps. Once this has been done, children need to be given structures which will enable them to find out what they want to know and to present what they discover. The teacher provides an appropriate sturcure for creating a frieze, doing soem research, writing a report, doing a representation or creating a person so that all children have a point of reference or starting point. This structure equals freedom for those children who don't have the skills to accomplish the task

on their own. Those who do possess the skills have freedom to use the structure if they choose, or to diverge from it. This principle supports the belief that all children can accomplish what is being asked of them, provided they are given the necessary structure first.

This list of six principles provides a framework to keep in mind as you plan a topic implement it in your classroom. Use them as filters to focus your planning, your assessment and your workwith children. In the next issue of the connection we will look at one or two of these principles in move details and share some examples of how they shape what we do with children in the classroom.

(Jeff Creswell   in http://www.storyline.org/history/index.html)

Story Selection Criteria

Based on   experiences of some previous researchers that conducted studying about implementation storyline approach at primary schools, story selection is most important part of a teacher's job. Here is a list of the most important story selection criteria as suggested by Cameron (2001: 167-169):

1) Real books or specially written ones?

    Real books were those written by 'real' authors for parents to buy for children, and there was a so-called "golden age" of young children's literature in English in the 1970s and 1980s, as writers exploited the use of colour and pictures alongside simple story lines.

2) Will the content engage the learners?

    A good story for language learning will have interesting characters that children can emphathise with, who take part in activities that the learners can make sense of it.

3) Are the values and attitudes embodied in the story acceptable?

    Stories can help children feel positive about other countries and cultures, and can broaden their knowledge of the world.

4) How is the discourse organized?

    Stories with a structure close to the prototypical format set above to be most accessible to children.

5) What is the balance of dialogue and narrative?

    The balance of dialogue and narrative in a story may influence choice, and will certainly affect the way a story is used.

6) How is language used?

    The built-in repetition of words and phrases is one of the features of stories that is most helpful for language learning.

7) What new language is used?

    A story can include some new language in a story, but no so much that the story becomes incomprehensible.

It is also essential to remember in selecting a story that since children can identify with the characters and through the use of their imagination they become a part of the story, the teacher should try to choose a story that fits the children's interests.

Bell (2006) also states that many authors, who deal with using stories in teaching to young learners, find stories to be useful for teaching a new language and character education. It can be summarized as follows:

- Language in stories has meaningful in context
- There are some natural context for repetition of language in stories
- Stories help to build a language system that learned by young learners

- Stories give the chance for young learners to use all 4 language skills
- Young learners can be aware of moral value after reading the stories

The Storyline may be used as an additional approach to the development of course books. Assessment of most course books reveals that different approaches may be used in presenting either new grammar or vocabulary. It will be hoped when the traditional linguistic teaching approach fails, this theory suggests several other ways in which the material might be presented to facilitate effective learning.So, learning a new language will improve the linguistic ability of young learners and also inject moral value to enhance process of their character building.

Character Education

According to Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development in Berkowitz and Melinda (2005:) definition of character education is teaching children about basic human values, including honesty, kindness, generosity, courage, freedom, equality, and respect. The goal is to raise children to become morally responsible, self-disciplined citizens.

The previous concept is related to the policy of National Education of Indonesia, year 2003, the purpose of education is improving of student's capability in intelligence, good personality and behavior. The Government expected that by means of educations both formal and informal can build the character of Indonesian young generation. Education as a preventive solution in crisis character that happened in Indonesia, therefore character education integrated into curriculum of education. Finally, education can be able to cope in crisis of human character and culture who is appreciate in outlook Indonesian nationality, and religious (Dwirahayu,2011).

To solve the crisis of human character in Indonesia, Indonesian government has sought to improve the quality education. it is indicated by a change in the education curriculum. Last curriculum imposed in Indonesia since year 2006 is KTSP, developed based on the following principles:

a. Centered on the potential, progress, needs, and interests of learners and their environment. To support of these goals therefore developing of student's
competence must be suit with the potential, progress, needs, interests and the demands of the environment.

b. Diverse and integrated. It means curriculum be developed by taking into account of diversity of characteristics, local conditions, levels and types of education,
regardless of religion, tribe, culture and customs, as well as socioeconomic status and gender.

c. Responsive to the development of science, technology, and art, therefore spirit and content of curriculum can encourages students to follow and make the proper development of science, technology, and art.

d. Relevant to needs of life. It mean developing of curriculum should lead to interest of stakeholders to ensure relevance of education to needs of life, include of social life, business and work.

e. Comprehensive and sustainable. It means that substance of the curriculum include all dimensions of competence, field of study and subjects which is   planned and presented for all levels of education.

f. Long life education. It means that focus of curriculum is process of development, cultivation and empower of students for long life.

g. Balancing of national and regional interests. It means that curriculum was developed by taking national and regional interests to build the life of society, nation and country (Dwirahayu, 2011:6-5) < http://eprints.uny.ac.id/942/1/P%20-%2012.pdf

The principles has been formulated in *GRAND DESIGN* PENDIDIKAN KARAKTER (Character Education Grand Design) by Department of Education and Culture Indonesia as follow:

Figure 3: *Character Education Grand Design*

No.	Rumusan SKL (Formulation)	Nilai/Karakter (Character values)
1	Menjalankan ajaran agama yang dianut sesuai dengan tahap perkembangan anak	*iman dan taqwa (religious)*
2	Mengenal kekurangan dan kelebihan diri sendiri	*jujur (honesty)*
3	Mematuhi aturan-aturan sosial yang berlaku dalam lingkungannya	*disiplin (discipline)*
4	Menghargai keberagaman agama, budaya, suku, ras, dan golongan sosial ekonomi di lingkungan sekitarnya	*terbuka, nasionalistik (nationalistic)*
5	Menggunakan informasi tentang lingkungan sekitar secara logis, kritis, dan kreatif	*bernalar, kreatif (creative)*
6	Menunjukkan kemampuan berpikir logis, kritis, dan kreatif, dengan bimbingan guru/pendidik	*bernalar, kreatif (creative)*
7	Menunjukkan rasa keingintahuan yang tinggi dan menyadari potensinya	*terbuka, bernalar (open-minded)*
8	Menunjukkan kemampuan memecahkan masalah sederhana dalam kehidupan sehari-hari	*bernalar (intelligent)*
9	Menunjukkan kemampuan mengenali gejala alam dan sosial di lingkungan sekitar	*terbuka, bernalar (creative)*
10	Menunjukkan kecintaan dan kepedulian terhadap lingkungan	*peduli, tanggung jawab (resposible)*
11	Menunjukkan kecintaan dan kebanggaan terhadap bangsa, negara, dan tanah air Indonesia	*nasionalistik (nationalistic)*
12	Menunjukkan kemampuan untuk melakukan kegiatan seni dan budaya lokal	*kreatif, tanggung jawab (resposible)*
13	Menunjukkan kebiasaan hidup bersih, sehat, bugar, aman, dan memanfaatkan waktu luang	*bersih, tanggung jawab (resposible)*
14	Berkomunikasi secara jelas dan santun	*santun (polite)*
15	Bekerja sama dalam kelompok, tolong-menolong, dan menjaga diri sendiri dalam lingkungan	*gotong royong, peduli*

	keluarga dan teman sebaya	*(tolerant)*
16	Menunjukkan kegemaran membaca dan menulis	*gigih (struggle)*
17	Menunjukkan keterampilan menyimak, berbicara, membaca, menulis, dan berhitung	*bernalar (intelligent)*

Adapted from Tim Pendidikan Karakter. 2010. Grand Design Pendidikan Karakter. Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan http://www.themegallery.com/english/

This Character Education formulation is implemented in National Education of Indonesia as the base of character building in formal education level so that character education get a lot of attention in every subject.

Discussion
The research was conducted in VI C classroom SDNBI kota Semarang, Indonesia on 8 Agustus 2012. There were 25 students with held by two teachers. It had subject *English* that discussed the Indonesian traditional short story, *Bawang Merah and Bawang Putih.* The topic of discussing was children attitudes toward parents.

Bawang Merah and Bawang Putih
(Indonesian Folk tale)
Once there was a beautiful girl named Bawang Putih. She lived with her father, her step mother and her step sister. Bawang Putih mother had passed away.Bawang Putih step mother and her step sister, Bawang merah, didn't like her. But they always pretended and act nicely to Bawang Putih if her father was at home. When his father was on duty, they thread Bawang Putih cruelly. They asked her to do all the house work while they sat and did nothing. Bawang Putih was very sad, but she couldn't do anything about that. She couldn't tell her father because her father didn't know that.
One day, while her father wasn't at home, Bawang Putih step mother asked her to wash their clothes in the river. Bawang Putih went to the river and started to wash all the dirty clothes. However she didn't realize that one of her sister clothe floated to the river.
Then she went home. At home, her sister asked her, "where is my dress? Have you washed it?"
"Yes, sister, of course" Said Bawang Putih searching the dress in her bucket.
"Where is it?"
"I am sorry Sis, I lost your dress," said Bawang Putih.
"Well you have to find my dress or mother will not give you dinner," said Bawang Merah angrily.
Bawang Putih went back to the river, she tried to find her sister's dress. She walked down the river bank and hoped that she would find the dress. Then she met a shepherd taking his cow a bath.
"Hello sir? Can I ask you a question?" said Bawang Putih
"Sure, what up?" answered the shepherd.
"I lost my sister's dress while I was washing our clothes, did you see it? It has white color, and makes from silk."
"I am sorry my dear, I don't know." Said the man.
Bawang Putih was very sad, and kept looking for the dress.

Then she met a woman washing clothes at the bank of the river

"Excuse me mam, did you see a dress floating in this river recently?"

"I don't know my child, ask the old woman there, may be she knows it." Said the woman.

"Thanks, mam."

Bawang Putih approached the old woman and asked her. "excuse me, granny. Did you see a dress floating on the river just now? I lost my sister dress while I was washing our clothes."

"Does it have white color and made from silk?"

"yes, It is." Said Bawang Putih happily. "Do you have it? Granny?" Asked Bawang Putih.

"I kept it in my house. Follow me dear…" said the old woman.

Bawang Putih followed the old woman to her house.

"please have a sit child …"

"Thanks granny , you're very kind." Not long after that.

"here is your dress"

"Thanks granny, thank you very much."

"And this, take this watermelon I give it to you…"

"You're very kind. How can I repay your kindness."

Meanwhile in Bawang Putih's house, her father was worry because she hadn't come back. He was angry to his wife and said why his wife pushed to look for the dress.

"Why did you have to push her to find the dress? I can buy Bawang Merah the same one," said Bawang Putih father.

Bawang Putih step mother was quiet and didn't say anything, so that Bawang Merah.

Then, came Bawang Putih. "Oh Bawang Putih, are you ok?" said her father. "I am fine father, and sis, here is your dress." Bawang Putih Gave the dress to Bawang Merah.

"And mother, a granny who found Bawang merah dress gave me this watermelon, lets open it.." Bawang Putih step mother took the water melon and cut it off. However there is no watermelon flesh instead there were some jewelries in it. They were very surprise.

Bawang Putih step mother was very happy and she excepted that she would have another water melon and find some jewelries in it so she asked Bawang Putih where was the old woman house. The next day Bawang Putih step mother and Bawang Merah went to the old woman house. They asked another water melon. They pushed the old woman rudely. At last the old woman gave her water melon.

Bawang Putih step mother thought that she would not come back to her husband house, she thought that it would be better to live together with her daughter since now she had lot of jewelries.

Then they opened the water melon that they thought that filled with jewelries. However they were wrong, there were no jewelries in the water melon, they found hundreds of poisonous snake, and the snake bit them. They cried for help but no one heard them. After what happen to her step mother and her step sister, Bawang Putih lived with her father joyfully.

http://chronicle30.blogspot.com/2010/02/bawang-merah-and-bawang-putih.html

After observing the using the Storyline approach in the VI C classroom. The writer and colleague got some findings:

Basic skills, integration

In topic work using Storyline the students have to write their own text (that includes spelling, making sentences and writing); read text to get information (that includes reading and finding main points); describe in text and orally; tell others both parents and students (that includes being able to stand in front of people and talk and being organised); listen to each other ;make poems about their feelings; provide themselves to be able to speak a new language that they have learned.

Cultural Aspect

Through story, there are many aspect of life that found in it. One of them is cultural aspect. Folk tales from around the world were created long ago to address the challenges of being human being. The folk tale gives us simple scenarios and solutions that anyone from any culture of the world can relate to. This realization in itself helps to build an essential quality of character . Every culture has folk tales, every child can find stories from their culture of origin. This is important to build character education for children, besides they learn a language.

Interest

This tells us that the first and probably the main challenge for teachers at school is to awaken their students interest toward what they will learn. If they are enthusiastic in knowing the subject, so it easy for them in learning process.

Learner-centred

Students becomes learner-centred because they find out their knowledge base on interested towards what they learn. When we ask first we also know what the students know, and can in that way decide where to start to add or as would be done using the Storyline method decide what key question should be asked next.

Co-operation

Cooperation in group work is an important factor in the Storyline approach. Therefore if the students have opportunities to practise their speaking ability in small scope. The evidence from this study strongly recommends not to have the groups too big except when the teacher is the leader. Three or four in a group is good and children also work very well in pairs.

Storyline in Enhancement of Character Building to Young Learners

It is important to note that children are the most important part in the process of storytelling. They identify with the main characters and they often imagine that they are a part of the story. There are numerous lessons for children to enhance character building through the use of a story telling in the teaching process. Below is a summary of the lessons and character education that are derived from our own experience as observers in one of classroom SDNBI kota Semarang, Indonesia :

(be active); each child is involved in the learning process actively

(be self-confident); everybody has a chance to express themselves

(be happy); children are not stressed

(be tolerant); they learn about team work

(be communicative); they learn how to communicate

(be polite); they learn how to listen to others

(be responsible); their emotional and social development grows
(be responsible and aware); they are able to make sense of the world
(be intelligent); stimulus to the imagination is on a high level
(be tolerant and creative); they try to find the right solution in a group, where everybody does not have to agree
(be responsible); they learn about real life through fairy tales and the use of fictional creatures
(be intelligent and aware); they learn from their own experience
(be creative and intelligent); they have to use their knowledge from other subjects
(be responsible); they learn to be responsible for their work
(be creative and self-confident); they learn to present their work and justify their ideas

Conclusion
Teaching English as foreign language to young learners is not easy. It forces teacher to be creative, enjoyable and rewarding if teachers feel that they have a creative part to play as designers of education. Finding interesting method which is suitable with curriculum needs creativity. Storyline is one of methods to all creative teachers who want something more for their students rather than follow course books. Storyline is able to offer main strengths: student - centered learning promoting excitement and ownership; and an opportunity to develop not only the 4 language skills (particularly speaking) but also skills of enquiry, communication and character building which are key aims of Indonesian National Curriculum .

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