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Teaching Values Through Story Telling in Rwanda's Lower Primary Schools

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Abstract
This research aimed at investigating how Rwanda's lower primary school teachers understand teaching values using stories and the techniques they use to teach these values. Data of this study were collected qualitatively using interviews, observation, and document analysis techniques. Research participants were lower primary school teachers who teach Kinyarwanda subject in which stories are mostly taught. The data collected were analysed using the thematic content analysis method. Data analysis yielded two themes: teachers' views on teaching values via stories and techniques that teachers use for values education via stories. Research findings revealed that teachers do understand the role of stories in instilling values among children, and they use some motivating techniques while telling stories. However, results of this research show that the implementation of values education via stories is still problematic because some teachers ignore completely the teaching of the values embedded in the stories; instead, they prioritize teaching language skills. Moreover, competence-based teaching and learning which is in use in Rwanda is sacrificed to teacher-centred. It was recommended that teachers should give value to its status of being one of the key competencies that the Competence Based Curriculum (CBC) framework in Rwanda focuses on, and they should use constructivism mode of teaching and learning to enhance quality values education.

Keywords*: Storytelling, stories, values, lower primary, teachers, learners*

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Introduction

"Values are acquired in life, they are not innate to the individual" (Şahin, 2021, p.577), hence they should be taught since childhood. It is at this stage of human development that children need to learn values that play a vital role in shaping their behaviours, because, according to Piaget (1951; 1999), children whose ages are between 2 and 8 years like leaning through imitating behaviours of animated characters and metaphors of nature. A story, besides its role in teaching language skills and entertaining children, "has been widely used by many teachers to play this crucial role of teaching values to young children" (Rahiem et al. 2017, p. 302). Thus, teaching values reflect the teachers' understanding of these values and the way they teach them.

It is worth noting that storytelling is a fun way of instilling values in children. Through this fun way, children easily understand the messages of the story and internalize the values embodied in them (Rahiem et al. 2017). On this point, Gartiand & Dolan (2014) affirm that it is almost impossible to teach uninterested children. Indeed, various researchers believe that characters in stories can influence the listeners the same way real people can.

Al-Somadi (2012, p.542) noted that children like imitating the people they admire and that stories, through characters, provide "abundance of proper role models." He further says that "sometimes stories can make even stronger impression on children than real people". This is supported by Rahiem et al. (2017) who revealed that stories convey values without imposing on children what to do but interest them in what to do, which is in line with the competence-based learning. In this regard, CBC assigns a significant role to values education, and values should be taught in all subjects (REB, 2015). On this point, stories constitute a good channel to inculcate in children a deep sense of values which guide them for pro-social behaviours (León & Castañeda, 2018).

However, despite its significant role in values education, storytelling may not be fully exploited in Rwandan schools to teach values, and there is still little research on its use in Rwandan schools. To support this, Tappan and Brown (1989) affirm that storytelling is not given a valuable place in modern education. Hence, Durdukoca (2019) is convinced that the escalation of misbehaviours among school leavers across the world reflects the lack of adequate values education. In this regard, Ngamije (2021) affirm that there is inadequate teaching of values in Rwandan schools due to insufficient training of pre-service and in service teachers on values education. That is why, to better teach values, Rahim and Rahiem (2012, p. 457) conclude that "teachers should be encouraged to explore the content of stories and help children connect their own experiences and lives to the story."

Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate lower primary teachers' understanding of values education through storytelling and the techniques they use to implement it. The finding of this study will be useful to teachers, parents, and educationists interested in stories for values education. It will also be useful to publishers and illustrators in their striving to publish appropriate storybooks for children. Hence, this study is meant to answer the following research questions:

- What are Rwanda's lower primary grade teachers' views about the use of stories in teaching values?

- How do Rwanda's lower primary grade teachers teach values imbedded in children's stories?

Literature review

Storytelling and story reading

"Stories can be read or told to pupils in class," (Sim, 2004, p. 140). Storytelling is about telling a story without any printed page in the storyteller's hand(s) Chesin, 1966; Sim, 2004, Cishe, 2024)). The

same authors further said that the story told has the same attributes as the story read but at different levels, because, while telling a story, the narrator maximizes using his/her gestures, voice, eye contact and body. On this point, Isbell et al. (2004) assert that "The storyteller usually uses more repetitive phrases, sounds, and gestures than the story reader."

Additionally, when reading, a reader uses the exact words in a given story but when a story is told verbally, the narrator uses words creatively (Lucarevschi, 2016), but the message of the story remains the same whether the story is read aloud or told. Likewise, Isbell et al. (2004, p.158) stated that when a story is read, the words are "fixed upon a page" when the same story is told, the words are recreated.

It is clear that, both storytelling and story reading, when properly used, can play a great role in inculcating values in the learners. Thus, since the end goal of this study is about teaching values through stories, we adopt using the term 'storytelling' to mean both (telling a story verbally and reading a story aloud). On this point, we agree with Isbell et al. (2004, p.158) who expressed that "storytelling and story reading are similar in content."

Teaching values through storytelling

Values are important in children's life. Aroff (2014) argues that teaching values is to help children to be aware of the good, love the good and do the good. Accordingly, values education helps a student to shape his/her behaviour. Indeed, there are various ways values can be taught to children. Vitz (1990) and Balakrishnan and Thambu (2017) affirm that storytelling is one of the methods we can use to instil values among children. They add that this power of storytelling is due to the fact that stories provide different options to deal with dilemmas. Moreover, a story preserves cultural values which are transmitted from generations to generations (Court & Rosental, 2007).

According to Bandura (1977; 1986), children like learning through imitation. Stories provide some positive examples to children, and children like imitating story characters more than imitating real figures in ordinary world (Al- Somadi, 2012, p. 542). Hence, stories help children to better understand the real world in enjoyable way and understand the people in their environment (Yoo, 1997, Wehmeier, 2025).

For a story to be successful in achieving its goal of values education, a storyteller should "use some techniques such as voice variation, gestures, body language and actions that involve children in the story" (Newell, 1995, p.424).

Moreover, there are three steps one has to go through while teaching values using storytelling: pre-storytelling step, during storytelling step and after storytelling step (Rahasya, 2017). In the first step, students are engaged in activities preparing them to actively listen to the story. The second step is the real activity of telling the story as learners act as active listeners by adding their inputs in the story. The third step is a concluding part in which the students reflect on the story (Ellis & Brewster, 1991, cited in Rahasya, 2017). On this point, Rahim and Rahiem (2012) noted that "Discussions before, during and after storytelling activities help children understand the message of the story well"—thus they internalize values embedded in it (the story).

Moreover, to fully help learners adopt values embedded in the stories, teachers should make sure that any storytelling session be guided by "clear objectives and effective pedagogical strategies" (Strangeways & Papatraianou, 2016 as quoted in Gunawardena & Brown, 2021, p.37).

Theoretical framework

This study adopted the constructivism theory of teaching and learning. According to this theory, a learner constructs knowledge and meaning from his/her experience (Bada & Olusegun, 2015).

Therefore, the teacher, during storytelling lessons, should involve the learners as much as possible by allowing their critical thinking.

"There are two major types of constructivism: Piaget's individual or cognitive constructivism and Vygotsky's social cognitive constructivism" (Kalina & Powell, 2009, p.248). It is worth noting that Piaget's cognitive constructivism focuses on knowledge construction by an individual learner while Vygotsky stresses that knowledge is socially constructed. They both (Piaget and Vygotsky) agree that in both types the teacher's role is to facilitate and guide the learners, not dictate them on what to do (Kalina& Powell, 2009).

Teachers should be familiar with both (cognitive constructivism and social constructivism) because their crucial roles in classroom make competence-based learning a reality (Kalina & Powell, 2009). Since Rwandan schools are fully implementing CBC, all teachers should use this approach in their everyday teaching and learning activities. To emphasize the relationship between constructivism and CBC, Luambano (2014 as cited in Mulenga & Kabombwe, 2019, p.125) stated that there is no difference between competence-based curriculum and teaching via constructivist approach.

Hence, this theoretical understanding was crucial for this study because, as stipulated in Rwanda curriculum framework, teachers should help the learners engage in activities "both in groups (social constructivist mode) and as individuals (constructivism mode)", (REB 2015, p. 23). Likewise, Hanlon (2000) as cited in Adie and Ushie (2018) concludes that teaching values through stories will be successful if the teacher will fully involve the learners in a competence-based mode.

Methodology

Design

Qualitative research approach (Creswell, 2012) was adopted in this study. We used the phenomenology method which is about describing a lived experience (Mapp, 2008) by participants. Since there are different types of phenomenology, this study adopted Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) which allows the interpretive approach to be used as a method of analysis (Jackson, Vaughan & Brown, 2018). In this study, teachers expressed their experiences in teaching values via storytelling.

Instruments

For triangulation purpose, various sources were used to collect data: individual interviews, observations and document analysis. Collecting data from various sources enhances better understanding of a phenomenon under study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2005).

Population and sampling

Purposive sampling was used to select participants in this study (Creswell, 2012). The selection was based on key informants who could provide rich and relevant data to answer the research questions (Patton, 2002). In this study, we selected 15 lower primary school teachers who teach Kinyarwanda subject. The Kinyarwanda teachers were chosen because many children's stories in Rwandan schools are taught in the Kinyarwanda subject. Hence, a total of 15 semi structured interviews were conducted. With document analysis, we focused on the Rwanda Competence Based Curriculum (CBC) framework, lower primary Kinyarwanda students' books and Kinyarwanda teachers' guides, as well as storybooks used in class. Besides, we conducted observation of lessons where stories were told to children by the teachers. We conducted observations in Primary one, Primary two, and Primary three respectively.

Validity and reliability

Individual interviews were audio recorded. Then they were transcribed in Kinyarwanda before being translated into English by the researchers. Member check technique that consists in giving back the transcriptions to their respective interviewees to check the authenticity of the information they have provided was used. Then after, we embarked on the analysis which was done inductively through coding. The codes yielded themes which were used for discussions.

Ethical consideration

Participation in this study was on voluntary basis and the consent form was signed by teachers, and some teachers accepted to be taken photos. Confidentiality was kept when reporting using 'T' for teacher, followed by a number while reporting the findings. Before the effective classroom observations, school leaders were contacted to allow us to conduct these observations during storytelling lessons.

Study limitations

The study adopted a phenomenology methodology. Hence the findings were limited to the information from the teachers and the observations of lessons during which teacher-students' interactions and learners' behaviours were observed.

We acknowledge that other methods (such as ethnography which allows a longitudinal study) would have yielded much information if they were applied—this would have allowed long period observations and interaction with the participants to witness variations in methods of storytelling and children's behaviours, as well as consistency in behaviours adopted as a result of values acquired during storytelling sessions.

Findings and discussions

The findings of this study derived from the result of individual interviews, observations and document analysis. These findings are guided by the following two themes that emerged from the data: teacher's views on values education via storytelling and the ways teachers teach values via stories.

Teachers' views on values education via storytelling

In this study, all the teachers interviewed argued that the storytelling is a precious method of teaching values. For instance, in T9's words, *"Stories play a great role in values education because they are about social lives. They depict what children meet in their daily experiences—from our cultures*." As can be inferred from this T9's answer, some of the values embedded in the stories used in classes are drawn from society where children live. This corroborates with Gunawardena and Brown (2021, p. 36) who assert that "Storytelling is a culturally inclusive and widely used pedagogical technique. "This was confirmed by some participants who gave examples of values they find important in the stories that they teach: '*helpfulness', 'love', 'forgiveness', 'peace', 'tolerance', 'respect', 'hard-work', 'cleanliness', and 'environment protection*'. As clarification, T5 had this to say:

> Stories convey values very well. For instance, when a child listens to a story in which there is a value of 'helpfulness', the very child will know the importance of helpfulness. He/she may apply it or emphasize it.

Additionally, T3 summarized one of the stories he uses to inculcate values in her children:

> For instance, there is a story in which Gikeri (a toad) is a character. Once, Gikeri went to pay a visit to her neighbour. Gikeri went there with her children who were very dirty. The neighbour,

seeing them dirty, he decided to clean them. Gikeri was very happy seeing her children cleaned by the neighbour. Then, she was thankful to him.

From this Gikeri story, children were asked about the lessons they learnt. In their answers you could find values such as peace (living peacefully with neighbours/peers etc), cleanliness (The neighbour of Gikeri cleaned her children to show the importance of cleanliness, etc.)." These quotes above present a good example of how stories are crucial to values education since they contain some values essential to children's life.

Likewise, during observation, T1 taught a lesson on the story '*Inyamaswa zo mu gasozi* (translation: '*Wild animals')*. During the lesson, through questioning, he guided the learners to discover and reflect on the values embedded in the story as follows:

Teacher (T): What can you do to preserve the wild animals?

Student (S): We can do it by not harming the animals.

T: How?

S1: By avoiding killing them (animals).

S2: By avoiding poaching on them.

T: Why do you think some people poach on animals?

S3: They become poachers because they need some parts of the animals such as horns to sell. These horns are used to make some ornaments. But it is not good because they kill animals.

*T: (*To emphasize lifelong learning among children the teacher asked*): after today's lesson, what decision have you taken throughout life as you grow?*

S1: Protecting animals

S2: Avoiding killing animals

S 3: Avoiding poaching on animals

These short answers above show that the learners, guided by the teacher, have discovered themselves the 'environment protection' value from the story. Moreover, the learners themselves decided on what to do in the future to turn the value into attitude and behaviour, and this is emphasised on by the Competence Based Curriculum framework (REB, 2015) in Rwanda. Within this perspective, Uhrmacher et al. (2013) noted that, in a competence-based learning, students reflect on their own learning and take decisions.

We assume that, the decision made by the learners would be turned into actions in the future as expressed in a Kinyarwanda proverb: '*Akari ku mutima gasesekara ku munwa*' (which can be translated as "*what is expressed through the mouth normally derives from the inner thought'*). Additionally, another Kinyarwanda proverb goes, '*Ukuri gushirira mu biganiro*' which can be translated as "*From dialogues/discussions comes the truth*". In this line, we support Setiawan and Aisyah (2016) who affirm that the knowledge that children construct themselves will have a deepen place in memory and will be remembered for long time.

However, even if children got time to answer the teacher's questions, they (learners) did not get opportunity to discuss in groups to construct knowledge socially as supported by Schuitema et al. (2008)

that students should be given opportunity to work in small groups, which enhances cooperative learning to stimulate critical thinking**.**

Adding another benefit of teaching value via storytelling, T7 clarified how simpler it is when values are taught through storytelling:

> It becomes easier for me to teach values embedded in a story rather than using any method—for instance, instead of saying to the students 'do not steal', it is better to tell them a story in which there is a character who stole something but got a punishment for that.

This view by T7 is supported by various findings. For instance, in his study on students' opinions about the effect of value-themed stories used in education, Kasapoglu (2015, p.1782) found that storytelling is the best way of teaching values instead of "sermonizing and lecturing."

Additionally, some teacher participants said that due to the values embedded in stories, learners, after listening to the stories, share the values they gain from the stories with other children or even with adults in their villages:

> You know stories contain values. My learners, after listening to the stories here in classroom, they acquire some values. Then they share the same values by retelling the stories to other children and even to adult people in their homes" (T6&T7).

We find this sharing of values very crucial because, such repetitions encourage lifelong learning as Souza and Oberauer (2022, p. 3114) noted, "Repeated exposure is assumed to promote long-term learning". Thus, we assume that as children go on sharing the values through retelling the stories, they will be guided by the values embedded in them (the stories). "Stories form mental images in children's minds that remain with them" (Al- Somadi, 2012, p. 534).

It was also found that learners transfer the values learnt into behaviour as clarified by T1: *"some learners tell me that once they meet other children, they will forgive them for their wrong because of the story they listen to here in class*". This finding agrees with Molenda and Bhavnagri's (2009) finding in their study on 'Cooperation through Movement Education and Children's Literature' that children turned into behaviours the values they had learnt in the stories. In the same line T8 described the importance of values in children behaviour through an example:

> When a child listens to a story in which there are some children characters who are playing, automatically, that child will know the importance of playing. He/she will want to be like these children in the story. Consequently, the play value will mark him/her—he/she will put it into practice—he/she will be guided by the good habit of playing.

This is in line with Brooks (1985) as cited in Kanak and Onder (2017) that "Stories help children make identification with the characters" and they want to be like them through modelling. This finding is crucial for deeper learning in a constructivist mode because "proponents of this constructivist mode strive to have students transfer information learned into other learning or life situations that are novel" (Uhrmacher, Conrad & Moroye, 2013).

Indeed, from the interviews, all teacher participants acknowledge the importance of the story in teaching values. However, during classroom observations, when storytelling lessons were delivered, the researchers found that only few teachers taught values while others used stories for language teaching only. This finding seems to be consistent with that of Maphalala and Mpofu (2018, p.9) who found that "The teaching of values happens by default; teachers do not plan to teach their learners values."

The ways teachers teach values via stories

The results of this study show that teachers use various ways in teaching values via storytelling. They divide the storytelling sessions in three main steps: 'pre-storytelling', 'during storytelling', 'after storytelling'.

Step I: Pre-storytelling. All teacher participants in this study reported that they start lessons by 'sharing the titles of the stories' with the learners, explanation of 'new words' and 'showing illustrations to the learners', which was confirmed by observation sessions. For instance, T7 had this to say: "*I have to prepare children to be ready for the story. As they are ready, I tell them the title of the story they are going to listen to*." During observations, the teachers respectively, shared the titles (see figure 1 below) of the stories with the learners either by writing them (the titles) on the chalk boards (see an example in figure 1) or by telling them verbally to the learners.

We are convinced that the title hooks the listeners (here children) to the storytelling process. On this point, Lodge (2011 cited in Schaper, 2013, p. 103) argues that, "The title of a literary work is the first part of the whole work"; it "has considerable power to attract and condition the listener's attention."

As it was reported by all teachers, after writing the titles of the stories on chalkboards (or telling them (titles) to the learners verbally), they (teachers) proceeded with helping children understand new words to be used in the story. In T7's words "*If you have to use new words, define the word in simpler terms.* "This was evident during the observation sessions—many teachers wrote new words on the chalkboards (see Fig.1 below). Some other teachers, instead, told the titles to the learners verbally. Then, they asked them (the learners) to keep the titles in their mind. We found the telling of the title (in lieu of writing them on the chalkboard) to the students reasonable because, the teachers who did so teach Primary one students, who are not able to read at this level.

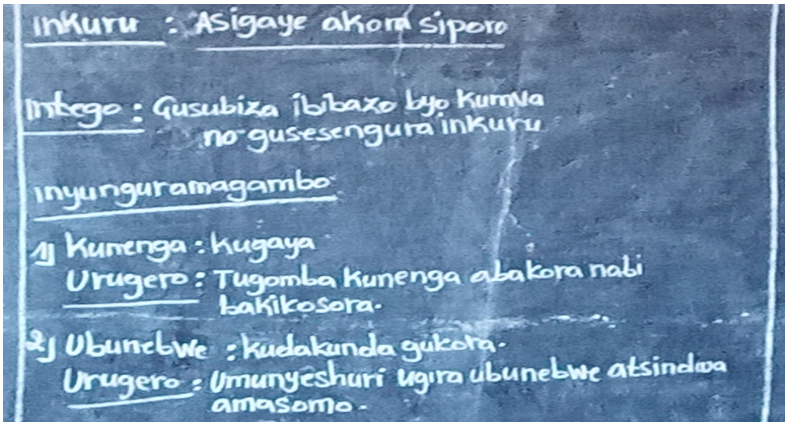


Fig.1: The title and the new vocabulary (words) in the story: *Asigaye akora siporo* (translated as 'Now *he does sport'*).

Additionally, the teacher participants used the technique of showing illustrations to the learners. As reported by all teachers in individual interviews, this technique makes the storytelling more attractive to children. In T1's words, *"Before I tell a story, children should observe the illustrations carefully—the illustrations make the story more and more enjoyable—interesting—captivating*. Likewise, in their study, Rahim and Rahiem (2012) found that "Children were more and more interested when they looked at the images, than when they listened to the story".

To help children reflect on illustrations all teacher participants confirmed that, after the students' watching the illustrations, they ask some questions to them (children). In T5's words: "*After all of the learners have watched the illustrations; they answer the questions on them (the illustrations). These questions related to illustrations help them discover the content—the meaning of the story"*.

The finding above is in line with that of Fang's (1996, p.138) who affirms that illustrations facilitate the children's "understanding of the written text." For many teachers in this study, often, the answers given by children on the story illustrations are different as evidenced by T7, "*As I ask them to say something on the illustrations observed, they normally give various answers*." This finding concurs with the constructivist theory of teaching and learning because, the proponents of constructivism such as Garner (1983) cited in Uhrmacher et al. (2013) agree that constructivism is a mode of teaching and learning that places great emphasis on multiple ways of understanding." In the same line, Sidhartani (2019, p.15) says that, "The process of understanding and interpreting the message is influenced by individual factors as a listener/observer." We, too, agreed with the above findings since each individual has his/her own way of constructing knowledge, which enables critical thinking. Hence, children giving a variety of answers deepen their understanding and internalization of the values learnt.

Other cases reported by the teachers relate to the behaviours adopted by learners as they watch illustrations during storytelling lessons. For instance, T3 revealed,

> The illustrations in the story make children very concentrated to listen to the story—they become attentive—they want to know if really what they say on illustrations is really in the story. So, they have to be silent to catch the whole story."

Likewise, T5 had this to say, *(...) stories also make learners eager to follow the storytelling calmly.* From this finding, we assume that using illustrations during storytelling helps teachers in the classroom management since children adopt positive behaviour by focusing on the story told to them. This finding is also supported by Vinyo et al. (2021, p.16) who argues that "interesting pictures of influential characters in a story catch children's attention." Likewise, as emphasized by T1, *"When children look at the illustrations, automatically they become attentive since they want to listen to the story until the end*."

The above findings from interviews were confirmed by the classroom observations. It was found that—during the observations, silently, all learners were focused on the story illustrations and the majority of them, as the questions on the story illustrations were asked, they wanted to answer by raising their hands.

Figure 2: Storytelling sessions

During classroom observations, we noticed that some teachers were rushing when showing illustrations to children. Indeed, children did not get enough time to go into details to depict the message conveyed by the images. On this point, Wilson et al. (2014, p.58) advise that to help children understand the story, "teachers must give children the time to linger over illustrations." Therefore, we suspect that some children failed to answer the questions on linking the illustrations with the text because of teachers' rushing while presenting illustrations to children, as reported by T8:

> Before telling the story, I show the pupils the illustrations. Then after, I ask them to compare the illustrations and the content of the story. But some students fail to give the relationship between what they see on the illustrations and the story itself."

Step II: During storytelling. In this study, during interviews, repetition as a technique used in this step was reported by some few teachers. In T7's words:

> In order to help the learners understand the story very well, I have to read the story for the second time. For this second reading, I have to read it a bit quicker than before.

We find repetition as a good way to help the learners fully understand the story, and be able to extract and reflect on the values embedded in them (the stories) as evidenced by Garti and Dolan (2014) when they assert that to better learn the values contained in stories, children like listening to the stories over and over again. 'Repetition', 'voice variation' 'body language', 'allowing learners' inputs should be used (Rahasya, 2017). In this line, Hayati et al. (2020, p.119) advise using 'several repetitions" but do not precise the number. However, Bayindir and Gökce (2022) caution that the repetitions should be well planned to avoid boring the audience (the learners in this case). In this study, during observations, it was found that only two teachers did read the stories twice; others read the stories once.

Moreover, when a story is told, it is better for the narrator/reader to highlight the meaning of the story by altering the voice, maintaining eye contact with the audience, adding pauses between events and using body language (Kanak &Onder, 2017). This way of teaching would help children better internalize the values embedded in the stories (SyahrainiTambak, 2016 cited in Mandira and Khoiriyah, 2022).

During observations, however, it was noted that only two teachers told the stories by varying their voices and adding some body languages with regard to the message conveyed in the story. For instance, in one observation of a teacher, as he was reading a story on '*Inyamaswa zo mu gasozi'* (translation: '*Wild animals'*), when he (the teacher) reached the sentence: "*Bukeyebwaho, Nyiramwezi ahamagara umukobwa we ati*" "*Kanyana Kanyana ngwuino ...*!" (Translation: *on the following day Nyiramwezi called her daughter: "Kanyana, kanyana, come...*!").

Here, to link the meaning and the storytelling technique, the teacher raised his voice while reading the words *'Kanyana, kanyana, come'* to mark the distance between the two characters which demands using a high voice so that one character can hear what another character is saying.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that children are actors in storytelling. Apart from being active listeners, they also participate in the telling of the story. Their participation depends mostly on the teacher telling the story. It is during this time of storytelling that "student participation should be promoted" by inviting them to individually or "collectively" imitate some actions, repeat some words or sentences in the story" (Zembat et al., 2013 cited in Kanak &Onder, 2017, p. 145).

During the interviews, a few teachers reported that, while telling stories, they allowed learners to participate by asking them to imitate some story characters using gestures. This was evident during observations when story telling took place; we observed only two teachers involving children in the storytelling process; others told the stories straightforward.

Step III: After storytelling**.** It was found that teachers allowed some few minutes for 'reflection' via dialogue and discussions. This is a good step to enable them (children) to internalise some values embedded in the story via scaffolding. In this regard, prior to storytelling, T6 reported that he asks the learners to be ready for this part after storytelling as follows:

> I tell the students that we shall compare their answers on the illustrations to the content of the story after listening to it. I also tell them that there will be other questions related to the whole story.

In the same line, T1 added:

> After telling the story to the children, I ask them about what they should do when they are in their villages and come across a child who is victimized by people. What shall you do? Will you pardon them?

This is in line with Schuitema et al. (2008, p.9) who support the use of dialogue and discussions, because, through dialogues children develop 'critical thinking and independence of mind.' We find this relevant since it allows children internalizing values after weighing their importance in their lives. We also agree that the mastery of various teaching techniques of storytelling makes the success of value education as evidenced by Rahiem et al. (2020) that the techniques the teacher uses to tell the stories play a great role in influencing the listeners (in this case children). Reflection on the story is essential because it shows whether children have fully understood the story or not (Schuitema et al. (2008). Thus, we assume that the values learnt in this way are subject to sustainability.

However, during observations, it was found that only a few teachers allowed this reflection part on values embedded in the story. Nonetheless, those who allowed reflection did not give it much time, and children were not given time to discuss in groups. Others used the teacher-centred method which conflicts with the constructivism mode of teaching and learning which CBC illuminates. On this point, T2 reported:

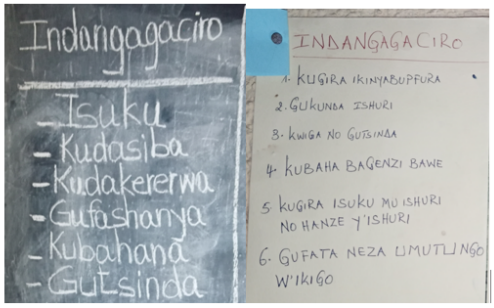
> You know, the story like the one entitled 'Inyamaswa zo mu gasozi' (translation: 'wild animals') is embedded with a value on 'environmental protection'. When I tell/read it to children I have to tell them about this environment protection value (…) I tell my students that the National Park is a good place for animals to live peacefully where they are even protected.

We are for the view that the teacher-centred method cannot benefit children, because, as Al-Zu'be (2013) expressed, it allows the teacher to monopolize the teaching and learning by "acting as a knowledge transmitter", which inhibits the growth of the learners in values embedded in stories.

Moreover, in this study, findings show that many teachers rely on indoctrination as a values education strategy. During interviews, many teachers confirmed that, instead of storytelling, they mostly use the morning assembly to inculcate values in children. For instance, in T8's words: "*During the morning assembly, we have to sensitize the children on environment protection by telling them not to step on gardens, not to kill birds, etc."*

Additionally, some other teachers said that the values that students must rely on are already in their classrooms hanged on the walls or written on the chalkboards as reported by teachers during interviews. For instance, T1 who teaches in primary 1 revealed: "*The P1 children come here without respecting each other. I have to tell them the values that should guide them. These values are written on the chalkboard*."

The researchers were taken to different classrooms to witness these values. During the tour, the researchers found themselves that the values for Primary one (P1) are: *isuku (cleanliness), kudasiba (regular attendance), kudakererwa (punctuality); gufashanya (helpfulness); kubahana (mutual respect); and gutsinda (hard work/success)*. The values for primary two (P2) are: *Kugira ikinyabupfura (respect/discipline); gukunda ishuri (studying); kwiga no gutsinda (hard work and success); kubaha bagenzi bawe (mutual respect); kugira isuku mw'ishuri no hanze ya ryo (cleanliness at school and elsewhere); gufata neza umutungo w'ikigo (protection of the school properties).*



Values P1 **Values P2**

Indoctrination is very criticized because it does not promote knowledge construction among the learners as Chaitanya (2017) clarified, indoctrination urges the learners to swallow predetermined knowledge (in this case values) without critical thinking.

Hence, we find it better to teach values in a competence-based mode via stories—the teacher should guide the students to discover the values and then help them to engage into dialogue /discussions about the very values to construct their own knowledge.

Conclusion and recommendations

This study has examined the teaching of values via storytelling in Rwanda lower primary school. All societies worldwide hail this crucial role of stories in fostering values to young people. Likewise, Rwanda lower primary school teachers recognize this crucial role in teaching values through stories. However, there are still challenges in the ways these values are taught in Rwanda lower primary school. Indoctrination is still dominating the teaching of values at this lower level of education. In this regard, CBC, which is implemented in Rwanda, encourages teachers to prioritize the constructivist teaching and learning which boosts the learners' critical thinking. Thus, there is a need for the teachers to overcome these challenges to better teach values.

Since stories constitute a valuable channel through which values are taught, teachers should be trained on how to use these stories in teaching values; they should also promote competence-based mode of teaching and learning values; and they should uplift values education to its level of key competence.

Future research could focus on the following aspects:

-Longitudinal study to find how values inform children's behaviours and how these behaviours are sustainable over a period of time.

- How stories contribute to values education through the lens of parents, school leaders as well as students.

This research adds value to the literature available on teaching values through stories. The results of this study could be used to inform education stakeholders on the gaps to be filled in and the awareness of some teachers who do not apply the CBC principles in the teaching and learning of values.

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