

# **Engaging Dialogues to Experience a Bigger Picture: The Potential of Portfolios, Digital Storytelling with Video Shows for Reading Activities**

**RENI KUSUMANINGPUTRI**

*English Department, Faculty of Humanities  
University of Jember*

## **ABSTRACT**

Dialogic reading develops the self. In EFL contexts, like in Indonesia, initiating dialogues as an objective in reading classes has not been extensively explored as these classes commonly focus on enhancing vocabulary and grammatical competence to prepare students for standardized tests. This study examined the potential of reading-mediated tasks incorporating portfolios, digital storytelling, and video shows which encourage both intramental and intermental dialogues in the reading experience. Anchored in Vygotsky's tenet of dialogue in language learning, this study explored the potential of tasks to engage students to see reading activities as growing-self learning. Interviews were conducted to collect data of students' experiences on instruction, digital storytelling as learning artifacts, classroom observation, photo elicitations, and the researcher's journal. Data recorded indicate the understanding of five EFL students in making meaning; interaction, connection, interpretation of the text, and the making of reflection-based tasks of their life for reading activities. The result showed that the mediated tasks optimize reading as a dialogic social practice.

**Keywords:** dialogic reading, digital storytelling, intramental dialogue, intermental dialogue

## **Introduction**

Learning with collaborative dialogues provides cognitive support for product and process of L2 learning (Swain, 2000; Watanabe & Swain, 2007). Therefore, learning reading should be seen as a social activity, rather than an individual one. However, for several reading classes in an English as a Foreign Language context, the process of making meaning of a text might focus more on linguistic decoding such as translation, surface grammar structure exercises, and text-based comprehension questions (Widodo, 2016a). I have witnessed that teachers with less preparation, teach reading with a focus on testing, for instance - when tackling difficulties -relating to the structure and grammar of texts, and -when seeking to improve vocabulary. They also structure reading instruction to highlight text comprehension questions and as a result they minimize chances of reading for learning and making connections with the world. With these kinds of instruction, reading feels like learning a 'code' to decipher the meaning of a text. Such teaching which are like tests, are insufficient as these lack a supportive environment where students invest in their learning, engage in interactive reading tasks and collaborate in learning communities (Widodo, 2016a). To address these weaknesses, several instruction methods have been designed and reported to be beneficial; portfolio (Goksu, 2015; Lo, 2010; Moore, Knight & Kibburz, 2014; Nunes, 2004), and digital storytelling with video-show(s) (Brenner, 2014; Anderson & Mack, 2017). However, how the two mediated-tasks are

used together in a reading classroom, what they mean within the frame of dialogues, and how these mediated tasks change EFL students' experiences about a reading activity are scarcely reported.

This article reports five Indonesian university EFL readers' experiences of dialogues through reading mediated-tasks with portfolios, and digital storytelling (henceforth DST) with video shows. Drawing on Vygotsky's view (1978, 1997) and Wertsch and Tulviste's (1997) perspective on dialogue; intramental and intermental dialogues, two research questions guided this study:

1. How do participants engage in intermental and intramental dialogues through the phases of reading-mediated tasks?
2. What changes in perspectives towards a reading activity do participants experience during mediated tasks?

## **Review of related literature**

### ***Reading Portfolio and Digital storytelling with Video Show***

A portfolio has been used in teaching and learning in foreign language contexts since the 1980s (Lo, 2010). The benefits of using a portfolio have been documented such as providing teachers with artifacts of students' ongoing learning progress as it shows what students know and can do, links assessment and instruction (Delett, Barnhardt, & Kevorkian, 2001), increases self-participation and self-reflection, and a more enhanced ownership of learning (Tierney et al., 1998). Despite the potential, studies in Asian contexts on the use of a portfolio revealed students' and teachers' problems such as lack of experience in using a portfolio, less preference for process-oriented than product-oriented instruction (Lo, 2007, 2010), time management, and autonomy of learning (Kuo, 2003; Lo, 2007; Yang, 2003). Nevertheless, acting as an autonomous learning instruction, a portfolio has greater affordances for students' dialogues with peers, teachers, and their-*self*.

The use of digital storytelling as an instruction method has been well documented in the educational domain both in foreign and second language contexts (Widodo, 2016b). As a multidimensional skill, DST provides benefits which are empirically tested such as enhancing learner-centered learning and engaging the community of practice for learners (Anderson & Mack, 2017; Brenner, 2014; Sadik, 2008). DST connects social and cultural contexts through the language the DST writers use. Because of its multimodal characteristics (a composition of text, audio, and video), DST engages language learners' agency and facilitates the writers' meaning making over their narrative story, producing their digital end-product, and circulating it digitally to invite discussion and reflection. Anderson and Mack (2017), for instance, designed a DST instruction as an after school project for African American adolescents who lived in an economically-disadvantaged urban area with high risks of juvenile crime, teen-pregnancy and dropouts. During the 6-week project, the participants reflected on one life challenge they experienced and made meaning of it. The instruction was shown to help the students see themselves as active agents of their own life, not merely as recipients of life through their narrative production as they approached and understood their life experience in a greater depth and with new insights. Self-reflection and identity-development frame the experiences of DST creators to shape their interpretation of life.

Video sharing has long been practiced through online video-sharing platforms such as Youtube and Vimeo as stories are meant to be shared and enjoyed. DST with video shows cater for self-dialogue out of which a *self* could grow and move forward. Video-showing is meant for authentic audiences and from the lens of learning it brings videos beyond the classroom as a provocative media for sharing authors' voices and building connections (Davis, Waycott, & Zhou, 2015). When a video is shared digitally, for instance via web 2.0, viewers are more global, dispersed, and unknown which may not suit a target of learning that aims at closer, empathetic and immediate connectivity, and belongingness with a certain community. It also neglects verbal, face-to-face, and live responses from viewers. The research of Davis and Weinshenker (2012) and Lenette et al. (2019) which practiced DST with video shows helped articulate learners' stories to be understood better.

### ***Intermental and intramental dialogues in EFL reading***

Reading should be pictured as a social practice. The Vygotskian view (1978) proposes that the human mind is organized through a subject's interaction with the world. It is the interaction with others that the human mind is empowered. Learning and development are *co-constructed* through the interaction with other adults and peers (Cole & Cole, 2001; Zeng, 2017). Dialogues, from Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, develop individuals' capacity because of their social functioning activities (Vygotsky, 1978; Wretch & Tulviste, 1997). This social functioning or social process shapes and reshapes the mind, cognition, and memory of learners' mental development. The dialogue itself is initiated between people (Eun & Lim, 2009), between teacher and student, between students, between the text and the reader (Wilson, 1999 as cited in Yang & Wilson, 2006) which is known as an *intermental dialogue* and dialogues within an individual's psychological state or *intramental dialogue*. This suggests that a human learns not as an isolated individual but as an active member of a society (Yang & Wilson, 2006). The key to successful learning depends on the participation of others to the development of a self. 'Others' in Vygotsky's notion refers to capable others, for example, teachers, adults with higher knowledge, and more capable peers. However, Shokouhi and Shakouri (2015), referring to Mercer's work in 1996, 2004, 2008, mentioned that 'others' are not necessarily those who are more competent, but anyone who thinks differently. Watanabe and Swain (2007) conclude that social mediation comes from peers from all proficiency levels, not only from those who are highly proficient. Fitzgerald and Palinscar (2017) and Zeng (2017) add that the dialogues can take place not only in face-to-face interactions but also in digital platforms.

By intermingling with others through dialogues, a learner works on making meaning of texts from different points of view as different readers engage with similar texts differently. Wells (1990, p.369 as cited in Kiili, 2012) argues that learners will see that "meaning is treated as tentative, provisional, and open to alternative interpretations and revisions". This means that the existence of others in the process of making meaning of texts help readers broaden, revise, delete, and add perspectives. These developments correspond with intramental and intermental functioning (Wertsch & Tulviste, 1997). Vygotsky (1997, 105–106) explains that "any function of the child's cultural development appears on the stage twice, or on two planes, first the social, then the psychological, first between people as an intermental category, then within the child as an intramental category". Based on this view, learners who experience joint activities and internalize working together with others would gain new strategies and knowledge about the world (Fitzgerald & Palinscar, 2017). To conclude, in

reading instruction, dialogues through social interactions provide a media where individuals develop their mental functioning of making meaning of texts.

In meaning making, readers need not only have linguistic capacities to decode the text but also to relate the text with themselves and their surrounding world. Hedgcock and Ferris (2009), following Kern (2000), state that readers must learn about discourse and the processes by which the text is created. The readers must engage in events that promote both social and cognitive activities (Hedgcock & Ferris, 2009), represent and cognize about themselves, others, and (their) world, 'figure out relationship among words, larger units of meaning, and between texts and real or imagined worlds' (Kern, 2000: 17). In other words, in teaching reading, the instruction should be geared on encouraging readers to see a bigger picture of the texts; that is not only what the text means, but also how the text relates to him/her, to others, and to the world. Additionally, texts choice should be with a connection and relevance to students and context to match their learning purposes, and initiate and keep learners' reading motivation.

## **Methods**

### ***Research context and participants***

This study was conducted on a semester course of Reading 1 in an English Literature Department of a university located in the eastern part of Java, Indonesia. The syllabus for this reading course aimed at emphasizing vocabulary, enhancing reading strategies (scanning, skimming), and optimizing language exposure through various reading texts or extensive reading. The participants were five students aged 18-20 years old. There were 33 students who followed the mediated tasks; 13 males, and 20 females. From these students, 5 participants were selected because they were the most active participations during the classroom activities. They were also more open to share their changing experiences related to reading activities. More importantly, they were nominated for the best video and most engaging video shown to the public awards. Due to these three reasons, their experiences were further explored. The reasons are relevant to the research questions. The five participants were two males; Surya and Dodik, and three females; Inda, Nadhifa, and Sandri. Four of them except Inda were in their first year. Inda was in her fifth semester but she took the Reading 1 course. Everyone, except Inda, never took a course which assigned portfolios, Digital Storytelling, and video shows before. Therefore, they did not have any experience in creating DST. Inda had experience with the portfolio task but not with DST and video show. I first met the four freshmen during the Reading 1 course, but I have known Inda since she was in her first semester. These students were in their post beginning level of proficiency with a TOEFL score of around 450-500.

### ***Instructional activities***

The participants were tasked with developing the reading portfolio, DST, and video show.

**Table 1***Details of the Reading Tasks*

Phase	Students' and teacher's activities
Reading Portfolio (7 weeks)	Go online or offline to decide one text to read, print or copy, and read on a weekly basis. Write a summary, respond to the content of the text by agreeing or disagreeing with the writer or share what they thought interesting about the text, and write new vocabulary or structural/ grammatical patterns. Share the text they read with their classmates with the teacher acting as a moderator. Take questions and responses from peers on their sharing. Teacher checks students' portfolio, provides feedback for comprehension, and keeps records on their progress
Digital Storytelling (4 weeks)	Choose one out of 7 topics from the reading portfolio file. Write on general idea how the selected topic relates to them personally. Write a DST draft. Discuss the content of the presentation with the teacher Get some grammatical and structural suggestions from the teacher. Teacher keeps records of the students' progress on the DST project
Video show (4 weeks)	Go forward voluntarily and play on a video on the DST. Take some questions and respond to peers. Make some changes on their video DST where necessary. Prepare for public video DST presentation. Take questions and responses from the audience about their video DST. Teacher asks for audience to nominate 5 best DSTs.

Within 7 weeks, the participants read 7 different articles, created individual reading portfolios, and shared their texts with their classmates. In the 8th week, I asked them to select one topic out of 7 topics of texts from their reading portfolio to focus on. The students were asked to link the topic with their life and made a reflection based on an idea from the chosen text. To develop their DST, I scaffolded discussions, ideas on how to relate their text with what happened in their life, and provided feedback on their DST draft and linguistic revisions. When they finished their first draft in the 11th week, they were asked to do classroom presentations. The purpose of this classroom presentation was to provide a class interaction, so that the students obtained feedback from peers. This phase lasted for two weeks. In the following weeks, they were checked on their finished DST to prepare for public exhibition of their video DST. This exhibition was an activity when all members of the reading class exhibited their DST to 90 students from the sophomore year that willingly came, enjoyed, and discussed their video DST. At the end of the public presentation, each of the 90 students was asked to nominate which DST that was the most attractive, interesting, and left a strong impression.

### *Data collection*

This study is a multiple case study (Duff 2008; Duff & Anderson, 2015) aimed at exploring participants' experience with dialogues in the reading mediated tasks. Empirical data were collected through group and individual interviews, participants' reading portfolio and digital storytelling as learning artifacts, classroom observation, photo elicitations, and the researcher's journal. Data from the interviews were collected after the class ended. Interviews were conducted to explore the participants' experience and to inquire their meaning making over the experiences. The interviews were open-ended sessions in groups of two or three participants at the time they were available for it. It was done in the faculty's canteen and at my office while sitting on the floor to help build comfortable situations and allow flexibility for gathering data. The interviews were carried out in Bahasa Indonesia to minimize language constraints and gain more detailed descriptions. Each interview lasted around 1.5 - 2 hours. Learning artifacts in the forms of reading portfolio and DST products were documented and treated as classroom artifacts. The artifacts were examined to see what the participants had accomplished as the result of experiencing dialogues in learning reading. Besides the learning artifacts, classroom observations and photo elicitations captured the nature of interaction between me as a teacher/researcher and the participants (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2000), and between participants. The researcher's journal gave me an opportunity to make meaning of what happened in the events. Edge (2011) states that this method helps to process, record, and reflect on how a researcher was involved with, relating, responding to, and experiencing the study.

### *Data analysis*

A qualitative inductive approach was adopted in data analysis (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013; Yuan & Zang, 2017). First of all, I reviewed the interview transcripts. To gain rich and relevant data, the Essence Approach to translation when transferring data from one language to another, such as from Indonesian to English, was used (Bashirudin, 2013). Widodo (2015) asserts that the act of translating data is meant to get the gist of the data of which the act itself is a meaning making process. To do so, I served as the translator and the translated version was checked by the participants to ensure the meaning of the data. Data from the interview data and classroom observation were read multiple times for a close reading and interpretation of participants' understandings and experiences. The repeated readings over the data were used to compile experiences of reading activities through the tasks experienced by each of the participants. For example, while in the portfolio reading phase, Nadhifa experienced interaction with textual meaning and her own interpretation over the text. In this phase, she also experienced taking responses and commenting on peers' different text meaning making while presenting in front of the class. The dialogue experiences of each participant were then examined with reference to the intermental and intramental dialogues and relevant research on tools for learning (Vygotsky, 1978, 1997; Wertsch, 1991; Wertsch & Tulviste, 1997). A cross-case comparison was also conducted to compare, modify, and integrate the findings from each of the cases to gain an in-depth understanding on the phenomena investigated (Yuan & Zang, 2017). Following that, the findings were confirmed, modified, enriched with participants' learning artifacts, classroom observation, photo elicitations, and researcher's journal. These were also subjected to detailed coding and analysis using the Qualitative Inductive approach outlined previously. To increase research trustworthiness for transferability and conformability (validity) of data and interpretations, the findings were sent

to the participants for checks and additions, or deletions which helped ensure the validity of the analysis (Thomas, 2006).

## Findings

The findings are presented in a chronological order based on the mediated-tasks (reading portfolio, DST, and video show) to shed light on the participants' experiences of intermental and intramental dialogues and changing perspectives of the reading activity.

### *Reading Portfolio: Interacting with the texts*

The participants experienced intramental dialogue with the texts as they engaged the texts' choice and texts' meaning from linguistic resources. First, they interacted with the selected text. As the selection of topic for the reading portfolio was free, the participants were drawn to select texts based on several reasons. They were inspiration from a talk with parents, connection to life experiences, belief that their chosen topic was everybody's favorite, and closeness to everyone's life.

My text was "Protecting our environment". I have a certain bonding with this topic, because I usually watched TV news with my dad and talked about disasters that occurred in Indonesia. At the campus, I spotted many students leave garbage and made some beautiful spots in the campus dirty. I felt angry. (Sandri, interview excerpt)

Sandri chose a text talking about the environment and how to protect it as it was initiated from her discussion with her father about many disasters happening in Indonesia like flood, and landslides. The bonding between her interests on a certain text started right at the moment she picked the text over others. For other participants, like Nadhifa, and Inda, a life experience described in the text led them to choose the text to read. For Surya and Dodik, their choice over the text to read was based on their projection of how they would get values from peers' responses to their selected topic. These suggest that intramental dialogue is activated from their motive to choose what text to read.

In this phase, the participants also experienced intermental dialogue as they made attempts to understand the texts by comprehending the linguistic codes to comprehend the writer's idea over the text's meaning by tackling vocabulary unfamiliarity and writing a summary. When doing response writing for the reading portfolio, some participants tried to find other perspectives from similar readings to contest or add their initial belief on the text's issue. One part of the portfolio is an individual sharing of a text's choice. Each of them was asked to go forward and share their text with others and receive questions related to text content and related issues. In this phase, they experienced taking responses and questions from peers to confirm, clarify, explore, and challenge their understanding of the text. One of the participants reflected:

I remembered the time when my friends listened and responded to my presentation about homeschooling in the classroom. My friends asked whether homeschooling made a learner become introvert, what the negative impact of homeschooling is, how a student got a graduation certificate by homeschooling, I was sure about my stance because nowadays there are many homeschools which could mean that many good things were offered by homeschooling system. Those questions helped me develop my understanding to the text. Frankly, I never

thought about some of those questions before. That time was good but tense too (Nadhifa, interview excerpt).

After receiving questions, Nadhifa realized that she would need to check her stance with the other opposing ideas to make her stance stronger. This learning experience suggests that intermental dialogue helps a learner check, delete, add, and revise the initial belief on something. This dialogue occurs as social mental functioning system to cater for the development of cognitive dialogue within the self and the self-internalization of new knowledge of an individual (psychological mental plane) namely intramental. I remembered offering her to choose this text to be her material for the DST project. I told her to find and meet someone who studies via homeschooling and do an interview and see what she could learn from there. This also highlights the fact that teacher's scaffolding in the form of instruction is crucial in the shaping of knowledge and skills advancement of learners. This is because the instruction is meant as a rule to obey and a firm signal that learners should go on a certain path to eventually achieve the desired aim.

These intermental and intramental dialogues were experienced through various forms by the other four participants. For Inda, for example, her text's title was 'Meditation: a simple fast way to reduce stress' which talks about techniques to find peace within a self. Both dialogues engaged her experience of reading activities differently. She chose the text out of several topics she had worked through the first seven weeks of doing the reading portfolio. She was connected more to the text because at that time she was concerned on finding self-peace because she had witnessed her parents arguing and fighting frequently. The text she chose engaged her intramental plane, that is the dialogue within herself. For Dodik and Surya, their selection of the texts was a starting point to create a video based on their prediction that their video would attract public attention more because the topic is everybody's favorite. All these participants interacted with all texts and especially with the text for their DST by projecting their contribution to the people who were going to watch and enjoy their story. This suggests that such reading instructions which collaborate outside viewers mediating reciprocal social interaction frame their engagement with the text. The interaction broadens their understanding of the text in relation to the world. Chein and Schneider (2012) contend that it could develop individuals' meta-cognitive system where such reciprocal interactions institute new behavior and monitor the quality and progress of the behavior. Additionally, such joint activities can generate a new understanding which is then internalized as personal knowledge and capabilities (Mercer, 2002).

Reflecting from my journal, in the classroom discussion, the participants somehow showed tensions when performing in front of the class because they needed to make sure that they delivered the messages well using English. The task requires them to showcase their speaking ability. Some questions became quite demanding as the peers sometimes argue back and refute. Teacher's role in class switched from a facilitator to that of a mediator as well as a contributor to make sure that the discussions remained relevant, and ran accordingly. Seen from the Vygotsky model of intermental dialogue between peers, Mercer (2002) agrees that peers dialogue may become brief, superficial, bland, and arouse disputes in group dialogues. This suggests a teacher's presence is significant to frame the dialogue as an exploratory talk to value learning.



### ***Digital Storytelling: Creating digitally reflection based text for others***

This phase discusses participants' dialogues mediated through the Digital Storytelling (DST) project. After they presented their selected text, they worked through their DST draft. However, beforehand they needed to come up with a theme initiated from the text they read. They were asked to interpret the text by connecting the issue with thing(s) that relate to their life.

During this phase, they experienced intramental and intermental dialogues while drafting their DST. None of them had the experience of making a digital storytelling before. This posed some difficulties. Although I had given them some examples, the instruction asking them to reflect on their life and make connections to the chosen topic is somewhat bizarre. They have never experienced such a reading sequence before. One of the participants admitted:

This DST project was my first experience. I felt it was a bit strange that my teacher asked me to reflect to my life to explore the text. However, I read it over and over again, and started to think about myself and how I love meditation. I tried to get into the text by recollecting my memory about my past. I found out that my past had shaped me into who I am now. I always prioritize peacefulness as the result of what happened between my parents. When I was a child, I saw my mom and my dad got into fights so many times that I felt insecure. I was afraid and lonely. I guess that is why I become a silent person. I feel that by being silent I feel secure. This was what I shared in my DST. I felt that my story was in line with the purpose of meditation that is to get ourselves out of distress. I thought that my story would have a chance to inspire other people. (Inda, interview excerpt)

Referring to her experience, the DST task exercised her way of making meaning to what she read. She connected the text with what happened in her life, and decided to create a DST entitled *Silence*. In her DST, she shared how insecure the life of a kid is when their parents are in arguments most of the time and how she grew into an introvert because she felt that being silent was the most comforting. However, she eventually realized that being silent is not helping her because silence was actually a repression. She invited people with a similar trauma to open their heart and talk. Then, they will find peace. Highlighting her experience in creating the DST, she undergoes dialogues with her mental plane. With this dialogue she engaged the meaning of the text with her DST draft. A new target after reading and creating a DST for people to enjoy and get inspired feed her reading and meaning making engagement.

This intermental dialogue was enacted differently by the other four participants. Surya for instance, got his first click to the text when he read it the first time. The text he chose as an initiator for his DST was his first text. The connection was put through his field research to find a traditional toy maker. The toy maker made him realize that money is not the source of happiness. The toy maker told stories about what made him happy about his life. It was when he saw children with no much money could play with his hand-made toys. Hand-made toys were much cheaper and because of that, he could help the children play.

I for a traditional toy maker then, it was very hard actually because no one seemed searched to care about a traditional toy. But I found one fortunately. I talked to him, asked why he chose to sell a toy, what was the story. When this conversation ended, I felt like I became a person with much more positive thoughts. That life is

a grace. People seek happiness from external forces, like money, become who he wants, but there is true happiness, when we can help somebody else. (Surya, interview excerpt)

For Dodik, during this phase, he experienced intermental dialogue by making dialogues on what and how important music was for him. He went further to explore how music helped him walk through his life with all problems. Although he did not mention what problems he faced, in the DST draft, he shared how being different was actually nothing to be afraid of. Sandri, on the other hand, experienced both intramental and intermental dialogues. She at first had an idea to retell what the text was. In the discussion session of drafting of the DST, I gave some alternatives on how her idea should be developed as her idea was not relevant to the instruction given.

My text was about environment and how important it is to preserve it. When it came to a DST project, my idea was that I was going to talk about how nature can help people. She (my teacher) said that it would feel like a TV show on how to prevent a disaster and my DST would not reflect the connection to my life/ world. My teacher said that I had to know that environment is not only physical environment like a forest and a river for example, but it can be psychological, like what surrounding family for example has made me into. I felt awakened. Afterward, I thought about something big in my life that had impacted me in so many ways, I thought about my parents' divorce. In my DST I talked how I felt as a child and how it turned me into. But my DST is not about how sad and miserable my life is. It is about how we need to be grateful over something. My DST is an invitation to feel grateful to what we have because somewhere someone has a worse life compared to us. The DST project has taught me that what we understand about ourselves can help someone. What reading this text helped me is developing my understanding, and going beyond the text has inspired me that reading can touch someone else. (Sandri, interview excerpt).

The scaffolding I provided her in the form of examples on how to connect a text with the surroundings or her life helped her feel convinced of what she wanted to share in her DST. This scaffolding is an intermental dialogue. Reflecting on what occurred with all the participants, examples of how to connect a text with somebody's life set a model on how to make meaning out of a text. The participants' experiences of reading activities before the project only covered on understanding the text by handling linguistic barriers for example vocabulary, grammar and structure of the statements. When asked to relate what they understood from the text to something else, for example, to their life, or the life of someone else, they felt a bit strange as it was an unfamiliar reading activity for them. However, they kept doing it because a teacher is an authoritative figure. The pattern of a teacher-student dialogue is authoritative (Mortimer & Scott, 2003). Reflecting on my journal, imposing students what to do felt like dictating them. It leaves them to have no options. However, many times when I left them with open options, they would come back a week later with no progress. Mercer and Howe (2012) suggest that a teacher needs to balance the 'authoritative' mode with the dialogue. Based on my experience, an authoritative mode of talk was needed at the beginning, when students did a project just to create a firm start as students seek for an acknowledgement to begin their work.

### **Video show: Engaging experiences of reading for dialogic social practice**

In this phase, the participants were exposed to two kinds of intermental dialogue. They experienced interactions with peers in the classroom exhibition, and interactions with a wider audience who were not their classmates as they engaged in an outside the classroom exhibition of their DST story. Each experience in each of interactions was different.

#### **Figure 1**

*One of Students' in-Classroom Exhibition and Participation*



With reference to Figure 1, the participants were asked to present their video in front of their peers for gaining initial responses to the content of their DST, the video layout, music, sound clarity, and general feedback for their linguistic inappropriateness such as its grammar, structure, and lexical choice. Although not all students came forward to gain responses because of the long duration of presentation of all participants' DST, I recommended them to learn from other responses and make notes from the responses for the improvement of their own DST. For example the color of the text they used in the video was initially white. Therefore, they gained feedback from peers on its feasibility. This use of color needed changing. The students who came forward and made their first showcase of their DST in the classroom experienced intermental dialogue in the form of questions and feedback from their peers and me. However, the feedback was more focused on the technical problems they encountered, and problems on grammar, structure, and lexical choice. Sato (2017) and Loewen and Sato (2018) show that this negotiation of forms is common, resulting in L2 development when positively responded by learners. However, different intermental dialogues from outside the classroom video show were found.

## Figure 2

### *Situations in Outside Classroom DST Exhibition*



As reflected from Figure 2, the intermental dialogue the participants felt were various due to some differences. First, the audience of the DST in the out of class video show was not their classmates, but their seniors. This highlights the fact that a new audience means new experiences of dialogues. These new dialogues engaged them with the text they created. The feeling of accomplishment and excitement toward the dialogues helped them build their new meaning to reading activities as a social activity, not only as an individual experience.

I felt very happy about what I did in the outside classroom exhibition. Many seniors who enjoyed my DST said that I am very brave to tell and share my personal story to public. Some of them got into tears, and I went on tears too together because it turned out that they had a similar story to mine. We ended up cheering each other and learnt that we are not alone. To me then, reading should not be meant as an activity to study, but also an opportunity to develop together with friends. (Sandri, interview excerpt)

What happened in the outside classroom exhibition was beyond what I expected. The story that I have kept it for years could be beneficial to somebody else. They who came to enjoy my DST shared their story too. I learn that I can relate what I read to what happened to me, and the idea of transforming one text into producing another different text is rewarding. (Inda, interview excerpt)

Secondly, the responses the participants obtained in the out of class video show were more content-related. These consisted of questions about what inspired the DST, impressions from the audience toward participants' DST. The audience interacted with them in a face-to-face fashion, not in a whole class to one-person interaction. This also showcased the fact that peer interactions with out-of class participants in an EFL context with the tasks established dialogical patterns that was based on meaningful content negotiation. Feedback on grammar and structure were minimum and the participants engaged in language production more. This suggests that dialogues provided more engagement with the audience, therefore giving more positive and rewarding L2 use experiences. One of participants admitted.

In the outside classroom exhibition, my seniors asked my inspiration, and what make true happiness is. They agreed on what I thought. I felt proud because they seemed to be inspired. (Surya, interview excerpt)

The number of questions from the audience and the degree of intensity of bonding between the participants and the audience gave an impact to participants' well-being. This is in accord with Clark and Dumas's (2015) statement contending that the feeling of contentment and excitement due to extended collaborative activities and participation encourages motivation. This implies that a video show mediates a collaborative interaction mindset from peers to occur as they engaged in content type of questions rather than grammatical and structural feedback. In conclusion, this phase mediated social engagement which led to a rewarding peer-learning. The interaction is as a channel through which the participants' ideas, intentions, and values are accessible to, understood, and reciprocated by others.

In the outside classroom exhibition I enjoyed the process. Many came to me and asked about homeschooling. My reading activity initially was only to read to get information. Now it changes into getting information and finding the real facts, and connecting it to me. This is not only beneficial for my growth, but also brings good impact to others and surrounding. (Nadhifa, interview excerpt)

This also shows that intermental dialogue and instrumental plane are correlated and affirms the understanding that tasks which mediate both dialogues will intrinsically motivate students.

## **Discussion**

The participants' experiences in these reading mediated-tasks with the portfolio, and digital storytelling with a video show indicate clearly that intermental and intramental dialogues help shape experiences and understanding of what reading as a dialogic activity is. Before having the tasks students as readers see reading as processing a linguistic puzzle to get the meaning of the text. This means they understood reading as merely a cognitive workload but not as social engagement. These practiced reading activities exercise their meaning making as social practice (Kozulin, 2003, Mello, 2012; Swain, Brooks, & Tocalli-Beller, 2002; Tellado & Sava, 2010) as it involves dialogues between a student and the writer of a text, between peers, between teacher-students, and among students- people-environment, and within themselves. Changes the participants had gone through were propagated through phases; portfolio, digital storytelling, and video show. Psychologically these changes are manifested in the enactment of intramental and intermental dialogues. Throughout the three phases, students experienced intermental dialogues by having their peers contributing to their textual comprehension activities. Events of explaining, refuting, adding, confirming with either positive or negative responses enable students to learn to see an issue from different perspectives. Peer dialogue also offers support in terms of cognition, and human socialization so that students are both affectively challenged and nurtured. Additionally, content-related responses the participants gained during the video show from the invested collaborative-minded peers result in enhanced reading motivation. Intermental dialogue also occurred in the teachers' scaffolding activity they received to improve understanding and textual engagement, and prepare for their independent learning. An interaction with the community as a stakeholder of students' learning products (public audience) enhances their understanding that reading is not only personal, but social because they learn that what they do in a reading activity is relatable and beneficial for community beyond their classroom.

Changes in participants' perspectives also happened within their mental plane or intramentally. The mediated tasks initiated the experience of intramental dialogue from readers' choice over what text they read. During the phase of writing their reading portfolio, they were invested in their reason of selecting a certain text over others. Many times in regular meetings of the reading class, teachers who assign their students to pick a text to read

and write a summary or response do not go further to ask their students to relate what they read with what happens around them or inside them. When a text is linked to a reader, the text has the potential to widen and contribute to new layers of meaning. This extension of the reading activity of a text engages readers with their mental state causing them to reflect on the message deeper or in some cases beyond the original issue in the text. The textual connection and reflection the participants made during the phases of instruction when transformed into an end-product of DST which were shared publicly fed on the participants' feeling of satisfaction of making a successful contribution towards somebody else. This positive mental episode certainly builds on engagement.

Two practical implications could be drawn from the findings of this study. First, in teaching reading, a teacher should not only focus on linguistic patterns of the text but to readers' self-growth. For example, a teacher should exercise both intermental and intramental dialogues of the students. Second, the use of a portfolio acting as assessment and compilation of works help students see reading as a targeted activity. Additionally, creating a DST as one of the creations after a reading activity provides opportunities for students as readers to engage in dialogic community practice. This shall help enhance the motivation of readers.

Although this study provides evidence that both types of dialogues embodied within the tasks contribute to more dialogic reading practices, it has two limitations. While this study used a written portfolio, digital or electronic portfolio would facilitate students to navigate and provide links to support their description on the issue. Second, providing more facilitative space for a public DST show will likely result in more engagement as students and audience can interact freely without so much noise. A talk-show from nominated students after the video show may also give different experiences of both dialogues in the readers.

## **Conclusion**

A reading activity for EFL learners usually lacks making use and function as an educational process. Educational process, from the Vygotskian perspective, is considered a source rather than a consequence of the development of cognitive and learning skills (Kozulin, 2004). Designing an external mediated activity provides a system through which readers will benefit from some assistance. This assistance, or scaffolding, gives different lenses of making meaning over something. When learning is contextual and occurs as dialogues, students learn different views to complete a puzzle or to broaden a description. This means that a reading classroom instruction should work as a situated practice that embraces the society of practice. Therefore, I argue that this situated practice can actually be manifested as a social practice when students are given an opportunity to share their understanding to a society beyond their classroom social community.

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