

**The Role of Fiction in Nurturing and Strengthening the  
Child's Questioning Skills: A Case Study, the Story  
*Truth and the Wise Man***

**Ali Shiravani Shiri**

Assistant Professor, Educational Group,  
Farhangian University, IRAN.

**Introduction**

The child is curious and questioning because human beings are inherently curious and truth-seeking. This feature is more pronounced in children than in adults. Questioning means asking appropriate questions of oneself and others to understand the subject or problem more accurately, which in addition to being cognitively important, strengthens thinking skills as an intellectual activity.

It seems that children's fiction are a good field and medium to strengthen and direct the child's questioning feature and then cultivate the power of creativity and thinking. Some children's stories, by creating a special form and pseudo-real experience of life, expose the child to a set of opportunities and situations which are artificial but carefully designed. Some other stories, by inviting the child to participate in creating the meaning of the story, actively involve him in the process of creating the story, on the one hand, and disrupt his focus on having a certain concept, meaning and form, on the other hand. The type of characterization, perspective, events and happenings, the way

the theme is displayed, the plot, etc. can be effective in inviting the child to actively participate in the story or to stay passive.

### **Research method**

This research is qualitative one and documentary method was used to collect data. The documents include valid indexed books and articles related to the subject as well as the story book *Truth and the Wise Man (Haghighat va Mard Dana)*. For data analysis, the method of deductive qualitative content analysis based on the classification of story elements and techniques is used.

### **Review of Literature**

The development of a questioning approach to educating children is the beginning of the research process (Hijri, 2003). The questioning approach provides constructive creativity in children (Akrami, Ghamrani and Aghalar, 2015). Questioning as one of the important features of human thinking makes it possible to think of new possibilities and innovative ways (Ebrahimi et al., 2014).

The results of some studies indicate that many educators are not familiar enough with questioning techniques in practice (Mahdavi, Ahmadi and Naraghizadeh, 1397). Besides, the family as an important element in education and the main center for fostering children's thinking and questioning has not been able to play its main function and role (Hayati et al., 2017). Even some authors have not paid enough attention to this very important point, so much so that critics have described child questioning as a dried-up source (Hijri, 2003). In fact, current curricula have not been able to promote students' questioning, thinking, and correct criticism (Smith and Holfish, 1992). The story is a suitable field

for practicing, nurturing and developing questioning in children (Lippman, 2015; Fisher, 2015).

**purpose**

The purpose of this article is to review and reflect on the importance of the child's questioning and curiosity characteristics and to see how one can develop and direct it through the story.

**Discussion**

Education of thinking, knowledge, language skills and problem-solving abilities in children are among the educational components that Norton, Hosseini, Lippmann and many experts in literature, philosophy, as well as education believe in. Education is done through story, both routinely and indirectly. Therefore, children's stories can be considered as a suitable field for cultivating the power of creativity and thinking of children. In addition to the opinions of experts confirming this claim, some of which were mentioned, the type and manner of appearance of the elements of the story can also be a means and a suitable tool to stimulate the philosophical imagination of children and invited them to think.

The questioning aspect of the story "Truth and the Wise Man" begins at the start by the boy's conversation with the stonemason and his basic questions. In the conversation between them, the boy realizes that there is something called truth and the stonemason has only a general understanding of the truth; therefore, at the end, the two are separated with doubt. This skepticism is the necessary motivation to find the truth and a philosopher wants to encourage people to have a spirit of inquiry and truth-seeking. Another philosophical dialogue takes place between the boy and the teacher, but the teacher does not have the flexibility and

comprehensiveness to respond to the boy's philosophical questions and uses his authority to extinguish the flame of questioning in the child. But the question of truth has awakened the boy to such an extent and he is so distracted that he does not stop pursuing the path of truth-seeking. In this story, the boy's questioning spirit at the beginning of the story and the comprehensiveness, deep thinking and flexibility of both old men at the beginning and the end of the story are suitable philosophical and educational models for the audience. Having a strong motivation and striving to understand the truth, having a spirit of inquiry, consulting and guiding others, solving problems by deliberating, reflecting and asking oneself about events and recalling past experiences and accurately evaluating them are valuable features of this story. The quarrel between the boy and his father and his teacher, which was created following the boy's questioning spirit and the adults' inattention to his wishes and inability to answer his questions, did not prevent him from moving ahead, but he became more flamboyant with the clever direction of the wise man. In the process of finding answers to fundamental questions, he was eventually led to intellectual growth and personality independence.

### **Conclusion**

By creating a life experience, some children's stories expose the child to a set of opportunities, albeit artificial but carefully designed. Other stories involve the child in the process of creating the meaning of the story by inviting the child to participate in the process of creating the story. The dialogic nature of the story, which may take place at different levels -between the author and the audience or between the main characters with whom the audience identifies- is also a feature that

allows the story to achieve this goal, i.e. fostering the power of questioning. In addition, the type of characterization, perspective, the events and happenings, the way the theme is displayed, the plot, etc. can be effective in inviting the child to actively participate in the story. In the story “The Truth and the Wise Man”, the conflict between the boy and his father and the boy with the teacher arises out of the boy's inquisitive spirit and the adults' indifference to his wishes and inability to answer his questions. Contrary to the negative behavior of adults, the boy becomes more flamboyant with the clever direction of the wise man, and in the process of finding answers to fundamental questions, he is eventually led to intellectual growth and personality independence.

**Keywords:** questioning skills, child, story, Truth and the Wise Man

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