

Institut Pendidikan Guru Kampus Dato' Razali Ismail

Storytelling in the Classroom

A 2-hour Workshop for IPG Lecturers, Teachers and Trainee Teachers



Ruth Wickham, Brighton Education Training Fellow, IPGKDRI

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Participant's Worksheets and Notes



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Storytelling in the Classroom

Introduction

Courses in Storytelling to children are generally a minor elective subject in Teacher Training, and yet for those who master this craft it quickly becomes their most valuable and well-used skill.

As an old Indian proverb says:

“Tell me a fact and I’ll learn. Tell me the truth and I’ll believe. But tell me a story and it will live in my heart forever.”

Some of the advantages of using stories in any part of the curriculum are that

- stories create interest and fuel curiosity,
- stories provide a structure for remembering course material more so than isolated concepts,
- stories are a familiar and accessible form of sharing information than abstract concepts, and
- telling a story from experience can create a more personal student-teacher connection.

(Green, 2003)

Objectives:

Participants will:

- Understand and appreciate the importance and value of storytelling as an essential teaching/learning tool.
- Discover new stories and ideas for creating new stories.
- Practise preparing for a storytelling presentation that will engage their students and remain in their memories.
- Develop skills for presenting stories to any age group.

Materials:

Participants need:

- Notebook and writing materials
- Participant’s Notes and Worksheets



What is so great about Storytelling anyway?

Worksheet 1:

Did you have a parent / grandparent / other relative who told you bedtime stories?

.....

Did you have a teacher who told your class stories?

.....

Have you ever observed a professional storyteller (maybe on TV)?

.....

What do you remember about any stories you were told as a child?

.....

Have you ever been a storyteller yourself? (not necessarily in English)

.....

Have you ever observed young children listening to a story?

.....

What do you think about the value of storytelling?

.....

What are the negative aspects to storytelling?

.....

Would you feel nervous about telling a story in a lively manner to a group of adults?

Children?

.....

Do you think that children would enjoy listening to stories in English, even if their English is not very good?

.....

Discuss your answers with the group.

A. Choosing a Story to Tell

Remember: there is a difference between **storytelling**, and **reading aloud**, although of course there is considerable overlap. The writer of the article above is referring to storytelling – retelling a story in an engaging way for an audience.

Worksheet 2:

How do you choose a story to tell?

What does it say in the article about choosing a story to tell?

.....

.....

What would be your favourite type of story -

- for reading in a book?
- for listening to someone tell a story?
- for watching a story on TV?
- for reading aloud to children?
- for telling/performing a story?
- for making up / writing a story?

Are there any types of stories you do not like? (why?)

.....

Do you have a favourite story from childhood (or later!)? (Why?)

.....

.....

Could a story fit into more than one type, or be told in more than one style? (Example?)

.....

.....

Are there any types of stories missing from the list?

.....

B. Creating a Story

Worksheet 3: Elements of a Story:

Jot down some story ideas for each of these.

1. Setting

Where does your story take place?

Geographical location (which country, city, town ...)

Environmental location (mountains, lake, sea, river, plains, cityscape ...)

.....

Climate / weather

Social (family, school, workplace, friends ...)

.....

Other factors

5 senses – sights/sounds/smells/tastes/feelings that should or could be mentioned

.....

2. Character

It's good if your listeners can identify with the main character at least in some aspect. This character could be slightly larger than life – stronger, smarter, bigger/smaller.

Character's Name:

Age Gender Occupation

What does your character want?

.....

Why does he/she want this?

.....

What's standing in his/her way?

.....

What are the consequences of your character getting (or not getting) what he/she wants?

.....

3. Plot

What event (problem) propels your main character's life from ordinary to extraordinary and shakes up their everyday existence. It could be:

- a goal he/she will work to achieve
- a problem or conflict he/she has to resolve
- an obstacle to his/her goal

.....

.....

What steps take him/her from the Problem (above) to the Resolution?

-
-
-

The Resolution (what you and/or the character wants to happen in the end)

.....

Make it Interesting - Add Obstacles

Here are some ways to add excitement:

- Weather.
- Deadline.
- Your character's worst fear.
- Give your character what he wants, and then take it away again.
- Turn a friend into an enemy or just a nuisance.
- Add random incidents that are out of character's control.

Don't forget to think about "Point of View"

Choose one of three points of view from which to tell your story.

- First Person – uses the 'I' voice, from the main character's point of view.
- Third Person Limited – uses 'he' or 'she' to follow the character through the story, telling only from their point of view.
- Omniscient Point of View – allows the author to be in several places at once and know what everyone is thinking.

Stories from Personal Experiences

Telling a story that is created from a personal experience can be very engaging for the listeners and even therapeutic for the teller. Of course the story still needs to have all the elements of a good story. In thinking of something personal to tell a story about, these questions from “Storytelling Tools for the Classroom” (Gere, 2012) provide a useful start.

- Have you ever been badly hurt?
- Have you ever been scared?
- Have you ever laughed so hard that you fell out of your chair?
- How did you learn to swim, or some other difficult skill?
- Did you ever play a practical joke? Have you ever had one played on you?
- Have you ever done something you are proud of, something heroic, something brave?
- Have you ever been to a dangerous area?
- What did you do when you were a kid? Where?
- Where did you hang out?
- When were you in a lot of trouble?
- Do you have stories about your brothers, sisters, weirdest relatives, or neighbours?
- Who are your best teachers, worst teachers, and best friends?
- Who do you think of when I say, “That person just drives me *nuts!*” Why?

Worksheet 4:

Which of these sparks a story for you? Briefly, what happened?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Can you think of any other good questions?

.....

.....

.....

Discuss.

1. Preparing to Present a Story

a) Getting Started

What story are you going to practice telling? Name of story:

.....
.....

You need to KNOW the story really well. That does NOT mean memorise it as such. Only memorise the **sequence of events**.

1.
2.
3.
4.

Can you visualise every part of the story?

b) Mime

Most people find mime a little awkward and even difficult. But *this is a very important step* in preparing the story for telling. As Gere says:

“Bad storytelling is often static and word- based. Children respond to physical movement and it enlivens the tales. Mime forces the storyteller to start learning scenes and to visualize the story.”

The storyteller needs to become the character and mime the scenes.

Mime out the actions of the characters for each part of your story. Ignore everybody else.

Make sure you can visualise and act out every action in your story.

Actions to mime:

.....

.....

Return to the rest of the group when told to by the facilitator.

c) Sound Effects

Hopefully by now no one is feeling embarrassed! After all, this is really **fun**.

Experiment with various sound effects. Different people will find some sounds more difficult than others.

Which sound effects (not words) will you include?

.....
.....

d) Words

The trick is not to lose the actions and sounds when we add the words.

Tell your story to a partner. Name

Any parts that you had difficulty with?

Changes to make?

Ask your partner for feedback. Give your partner feedback.

Pair up with a different partner. Name

Any parts that you had difficulty with?

Changes to make?

Don't be distracted by other pairs.



2. Telling the Story.

a) Character Voices, Faces, and Placement

Consider your characters, their voices, and their physical placement in your storytelling space.

Worksheet 5:

Consider your story, think of two characters and jot notes about how you could depict each one.

Character 1: Name

Age / physical characteristics

Position on stage during story (left / right etc.)

Facial expression

Gestures

Voice and language

Character 2: Name

Age / physical characteristics

Position on stage during story (left / right etc.)

Facial expression

Gestures

Voice and language

Demonstrate to a partner and discuss and if necessary adapt ideas.

b) Eye contact

The storyteller must make eye contact with the audience. This will 'hook' them and keep them listening. They will each know that the storyteller is talking directly to them.

c) Five senses

Your story should have three to five sensory descriptions.

On the next page take some notes about adding descriptive passages to your storytelling and discuss it with their group. Literary Devices can be used too.

Worksheet 6:

Consider three to five points in your story where you could insert a short, colourful description. Plan how you will “show” the audience.

1. Description of

.....

Description:

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. Description of

.....

Description:

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Description of

.....

Description:

.....

.....

.....

.....



3. Project

Prepare a story.

Practice your story (in front of a mirror).

Tell your story to a group of classmates.

Listen to feedback and make adaptations.

Tell your story to a group of children.

Report back to ruth.wickham@gmail.com .

If you chose to tell an original story, are you willing to have it included on <http://storiesformalaysiankids.weebly.com> for others to enjoy?

.....

Please take a few minutes to fill in the evaluation form on the next page.

Evaluation

Please fill in the evaluation sheet then remove it from your booklet and hand it in.

Participants Workshop Evaluation

Name *(optional)* Date

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I believe that Storytelling is very important for good teaching. <i>(optional comment)</i>				
I now have the skills I need to be an effective storyteller. <i>(optional comment)</i>				
I will definitely tell lots of stories to my students. <i>(optional comment)</i>				
Telling stories makes me very nervous. <i>(optional comment)</i>				
I think I can make up good stories to tell. <i>(optional comment)</i>				
I am only going to read stories out of books. <i>(optional comment)</i>				
Other comment				