
Personal and creative storytelling: from folk tales to our own stories

Webinar handout

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What is this webinar about?

- storytelling means sharing a story orally, either spontaneously or after rehearsal, without referring to or reciting from a fixed script
- students relate meanings and metaphors in folk tales and fables to their own life experiences
- the language classroom is a perfect environment for students to tell and be told stories about each other's lives and experiences
- storytelling activities can be adapted for young learners and adults of different ages, in different size classes, at different levels, with different needs

What do storytelling teachers do?

- while telling stories, teachers set aside books and screens
- teachers modify the English they use to make the story comprehensible and appropriately challenging for their students
- teachers interact with students
- teachers can translate or reformulate students' ideas into English which is appropriate to their level and to the story

What do storytelling learners of English do?

- live listening to their teacher and to each other is satisfying for language learners because they are engaged in a more naturally human way

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- students are invited to respond personally and creatively by listening closely to each other
 - personal stories are prompted and generated by other students' personal stories

Personal storytelling techniques for teachers and learners to develop

- talk about emotions
- use actions: mimes and gestures, and involve senses
- include specific details
- use voice modulation to add drama e.g. vary tempo, volume, pitch, and use different voices to show different characters
- build in interaction e.g. 'guess what happened next'
- focus on or start with a pivotal moment
- round up the story with the main point of the story
- consider exaggerating a bit (don't we all do this?)

What are the results of regular storytelling activities?

- meaningful learning is memorable
- regular storytelling activities lead to students' inhibitions falling away
- having their classmates pay close attention and respond positively builds confidence
- communicating more creatively, expressively, confidently and fluently in English
- students get a sense of themselves as creators of their own stories
- students feel comfortable about sharing their feelings
- students' sense of personal worth grows
- a class of storytellers where the teacher can focus on being an enabler
- storytelling promotes and maintains positive classroom dynamics and an inclusive learning environment
- students' stories are the richest renewable resources that can be shared for a community of learners to thrive

A recording of David's webinar can be watched here: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/news-and-events/webinars/webinars-teachers/stories-classroom-mini-event>