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CREATING A STORYTELLING CLASSROOM FOR STORYTELLING WORLD

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Abstract

This article of “Creating a storytelling classroom for storytelling world” explores the value of storytelling in English language learning. Strong emphasis is placed on the role that stories of personal experience play in human interaction and how these natural conversations foster a better language learning experience. The listener outlines a four-step approach to help students develop conversational skills as storytellers, including techniques for improving fluency and honing listening skills.

Annotatsiya

Ushbu "Hikoya dunyosi uchun hikoyalar sinfini yaratish" maqolasining ushbu

maqolasi ingliz tilini o'rganishda hikoya qilishning ahamiyatini o'rganadi. Shaxsiy tajriba hikoyalari odamlarning o'zaro ta'sirida o'ynaydigan rolga va bu tabiiy suhbatlar tilni yaxshiroq o'rganish tajribasiga qanday yordam berishiga katta e'tibor beriladi. Tinglovchi talabalarga hikoyachi sifatida so'zlashuv ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirishga yordam beradigan to'rt bosqichli yondashuvni, shu jumladan ravonlikni oshirish va tinglash ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirish usullarini belgilaydi.

Key words: Storytelling, communicating, learn language, skills, creative output

Kalit so'zlar: hikoya qilish, muloqot qilish, tilni o'rganish, ko'nikmalar, ijodiy natijalar

As teachers, we often ask ourselves: “How can we develop creative thinking of our students? How can we ensure that our lessons are fun making and useful for them?” We, the teachers today always seek to find new ways to help the learners unleash their creativity. In this post, I share with you some thoughts about how we can use storytelling to help our students learn language in effective and enjoyable ways.

When I was a young, my sister used to fascinate me and the rest of the family because she had a very captivating way of unfolding events that kept the audience glued to their seats. I remember getting so engrossed in the story that I fell off the stool. Stories, and creative and effective expression still fascinate me, because stories not only made my childhood fun but they also greatly enhanced my language development. As the old Nepali saying goes, ‘those who can tell good stories are worth adorning with garlands of flowers and fame’. Hearing a story is heartwarming and a storyteller can make the world come alive for the listener. The power of storytelling is attested by sayings like this in many cultures. And as language teachers, we all know that power. When telling stories, speakers develop language skills, as well as build confidence for communicating their ideas.

Storytelling in the Context of Teaching/Learning Language

In the context of learning language, storytelling allows learners to learn and express new ideas, use new vocabulary and grammatical structures, and put such language skills to use within the broader context of events and ideas in the story. Storytelling gives learners the opportunity to use language in a holistic way.

Highlighting how the use of story in language classroom is a powerful tool in the language learning process, Jones (2012) argues that “Once learners get into conversational storytelling, it is an enjoyable experience for both them and the teacher.” There’s no doubt that stories can be fun and also there is more to storytelling than it meets the eye. One has to ensure successful learning of language as well. According to Morgan & Rinvoulcri (2003), successful second language learning is “far more a matter of unconscious acquisition than of conscious, systematic study.” The stories could be such method of unconscious input that can ensure creative output. Stories unconsciously draw a learner towards them. “They capture and hold the imagination of learners; they create empathy as children identify with characters and situations in the stories; they present language in authentic contexts, thus promoting both grammatical and vocabulary development; they facilitate acquisition through multiple repetition (both of the language in the story, and as the story is told over and again)” (Maley, 2008, p. 4).

Hence, storytelling can be a powerful tool for teaching language. Stories also help students to be expressive, imaginative and capable of using language naturally in real context. Telling stories is a natural way of engaging students to communicate complex ideas. Stories when used in classroom help students practice communication and expression. If we as a teacher can help students love stories, we will pave way for them to be extensive readers in the future.

It is worth noting at this point that storytelling is more than just reading aloud. Actually it is NOT reading out loud. When a story is told live, the teller can engage

listeners and can create an intimate bond through his/her voice and eye contact. Another obvious benefit of storytelling over reading aloud is improvisation through the use of mimes, gestures and body language.

What Type of Stories?

It is not enough for us as a language teacher to go to a class with any story. If you plan to tell a story to a class full of eager minds, there are two questions to consider first.

Is this the story I enjoy telling?

Is this the story my students would find entertaining or thought provoking?

The stories that you choose to present in the class should touch you and your students should be able to relate to it the way you relate to it. Your reaction to the story and your enthusiasm can really ignite a desire in your students to be better recipient and eager participants. Choosing a good story is a crucial part of storytelling. Don't tell a story just for the sake of storytelling. Let the story be a part of you. Know your students well and choose a story that might easily be their story.

For my English lesson, one day, I chose a fairly easy story about a tortoise, having a bad day, decides to run away from home. I planned my lesson around it and decided to use this story in two different levels: one primary and another secondary. I chose grade 5 in the primary level and grade 10 in the secondary level. I told the same story to the classes, improvising and detailing the story as per their level. After an initial round of storytelling, I got the students talking about their feelings. I asked them if they could relate to the character and if they have ever in their life felt like running away. All the students responded with "Yes". When I asked them to write down a similar story, I saw them eagerly opening their notebooks and writing energetically. In the story, the main character returns home after learning the value of his family and friends. The story not only helped them in their language learning process, it

also helped them to meditate on their lives by relating themselves to.

Stories are everywhere; in fact stories are our way of life. “Stories are central to what it means to be human. The human mind seems to be hardwired for the creation and reception of narratives. It is even true to say that we are the stories that make us up: stories we have heard, we have told, we enact daily” (Maley, 2008, p.4). There are lots of sources of story. We can choose our stories from fairy tales, traditional folklores, culture, proverbs, pictures, newspaper clippings, films, personal anecdotes, rumors, imagination etc.

Who can benefit?

As a teacher of language, I have found storytelling very helpful. However we should not just limit its use in language classroom. Stories can be used in a math, science and social studies classes as well. Stories are not limited to kindergarten only but can be useful for secondary classes as well. Stories can be told to any level of learner. Beginners can benefit through it and it will aid their literacy and language learning. Even advanced learners are benefited through storytelling; they can refine their already learnt language skills and polish their ideas. Stories give them opportunity to be creative with what they have already learnt.

Classroom Activities

Storytelling is an effective alternative to traditional language teaching activities. There are a lot of ways through which we can use storytelling in our classroom. As stated by Morgan & Rinvoulcri (2003), storytelling activities range from introspective to interactive, beginner to advance, written to oral, individual to group. Stories can be planned and delivered in such a way that it achieves its objectives. If our objective is to help students with grammar, then we can choose a story with recursive pattern of words and phrases. Our telling can give them exposure to the target language. Apart from grammar, we can focus on vocabulary, intonations and

phonetics to help them acquire English language easily and successfully.

Choosing a good story is a crucial part of storytelling. The main part is storytelling itself. Your relation and attitude towards the story matters a lot. Once the story has been delivered you need to plan various activities to help the students contemplate the impact. Group discussion based on various probing question can help the students relate to the story. You can prepare the questions beforehand and have the students talk about it with each other. The questions can range from their reaction to various elements or aspect of the story. If your students are advanced learner you can have them discuss the literary aspect of the story. Have the students paraphrase the story individually and they can even write a reflection on it. Another activity would be to write a similar story on a totally new context.

Dramatizing the story is another method of exploiting stories. Either you dramatize the storytelling itself or have your students retell it in a form of drama. Role playing and role taking helps the students with revision and in doing so they get familiarized with the grammatical, semantic, structural aspect thus unconsciously learning language. Retelling a story is fun and enjoyable. Getting the students to narrate their story in the class often creates a receptive environment in the classroom where more than one student will be willing to share similar experience. Tannen (1984) has stated that one person's narrative may often be taken up by one or more of the listeners who will add similar narratives of their own to create what she refers to as a "story chain".

Apart from storytelling, creating similar stories through parallel writing helps them a lot. Get the students create a story with the help of theme words either individually or in a group. Instead of the teacher telling the story, students can also do the telling. This will help in a successful two way communication in a language classroom while giving an opportunity to the teacher to evaluate the learner.

Using pictures and shapes, together the teachers and students can create a new story

to tell. Sometimes we can tell an incomplete story and have the students complete it and tell it. Taking an event from a newspaper clipping and telling it in a form of story can also help the students.

Conclusion

Storytelling, which is an integral part of human life, can be vital in language teaching. Basing the language lessons on stories have creative impact on the students. If we cultivate a love of stories in our students through storytelling, we can help them learn without giving them the monotonous drill and bland role play. Stories add a humanistic element in teaching making it quite effective. Various classroom activities based on stories not just make your lesson comprehensible and useful, it also adds fun to your teaching.

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