

Learning English Through Stories

Presented by: **Kamal ELHADRI**
Elhadri05@hotmail.com

Introduction

The trends in English Language Teaching lean heavily toward communicative and authentic language use. As English language teaching professionals, we are always on the lookout for new ideas and activities to expand the repertoire of dynamics in our EFL classrooms. One area which could always attract more attention is the use of storytelling. Just a few story activities can bring a classroom to life. Teaching English through story telling provides opportunities to teach the four skills separated and integrated. Still, many teachers shy away from including storytelling activities in their lessons. In this workshop, I'll try to address a few of the most common objections, and then give some practical suggestions for starting using this technique, I will also discuss the power of story inside the classroom as well as the criteria which teachers may rely on to select a story for their students.

I- Why teachers do not use story in their classrooms:

1. They do not have time;
2. It is not a serious or effective way for teaching English;
3. They do not know how to use it effectively;
4. It is synonymous with classroom disorder and chaos.

II- The reasons for using storytelling in teaching :

From the literature and from my own experience, I find several advantages in the use of jokes for teaching of English:

1. Motivate students;
2. Help children build confidence;
3. Appropriate for students different learning styles;
4. Language in context;
5. Cross-curricular content;
6. The pace of the lesson;
7. Promotes the four skills;
8. Develop student's imagination and creativity;
9. Culture bearer ;
10. A solution to limited resources;
11. A good way to encourage team work;
12. It is a natural way to learn language.

Partnership for Learning Follow-on conference
Spring 2007, Rabat Morocco
Collaborate, Share and Improve!

III- How to Select Stories to Tell Young Listeners

1. Read, read, read ;
2. Choose a simple story;
3. Choose a story from the culture of the students;
4. Repetitive words and phrases;
5. Often humorous;
6. Interesting and entertaining story;
7. Clear message or moral with positive values;
8. Reflect on your selection.

IV-Tips for using storytelling activities

1. Give one instruction at a time;
2. Make sure that the instructions are very clear.
3. Teach students how to work in pairs and how to work in small groups.
4. Make sure that there are predetermined signals for quieting students.

V- Suggested activities

For speaking skills: Storytelling with objects or with pictures.

For listening skills: Read or tell simple stories to students.

For reading skills: You may choose to read the story or ask student to read it silently.

For writing skills: Have the learners draw or paint a scene or character from a story and then write at least one line from the story under the picture.

Here are some ways in which the four skills combined are used to enhance critical thinking and creativity.

- Students retell the story;
- Use total physical response,
- Use key words of a story and ask students to come up with the whole story.
- Create story cards;
- Use story theater,
- Dictate short story
- Number the picture in order, then tell the story.

VI-Valuable References

1. Nasreddin Hodja, Stories to Read and Retell. 2004. ed. Raymond C. Clarck. Pro Lingua Association . USA.
2. Marsland Bruce. Lesson from Nothing .2006. University press, Combridge.
3. Language Activities for Teenagers. 2004. Ed. Seth Lindstromberg . Combridge University Press.
4. English Forum Volume 44 number2, 2006.
5. Useful Websites
 1. www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/literature/storytelling.shtml
 2. www.storyarts.org/classroom/retelling/index.htm.
 3. <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/hodja.html#everyone>.