

Story Telling a Method of Language Teaching

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Abstract

The teachers own role in children's cognition could be enhanced if they assume a more active role in relation to the process of knowledge construction in which children are engaged. A sensitive and informed teacher is aware of this and is able to engage children through well chosen activities like story telling so they are able to realise their developmental potential. By this write up let me analyse the role of story in English classroom

Key words: Story, Language, Teaching, cognition

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Introduction

The Secondary Education Commission (1952) has emphasised the need for right methods of teaching in these words, “every teacher and educationist of experience knows that even the best curriculum and the most perfect syllabus remain dead unless quickened into life by the right methods of teaching and the right kind of teachers”. A method is not merely a device adopted for communicating certain items of information to students and exclusively the concern of the teacher who is supposed to be at the ‘giving end’. A method must link up the teacher and his pupils into an organic relationship with constant mutual interaction.

Story telling is one of the most important methods of teaching. It’s an art which enables the teacher to come very close to the heart of the students and thereby he attracts their attention. This art of storytelling aims at presenting to the pupils through the medium of speech, clear vivid, interesting, ordered sequences of events. Story telling enables the teacher to make lessons lively and interesting to the pupils.

Story telling as cognition

Experience has an important place in the process of knowledge construction or understanding of a concept. Story telling method is perhaps the most important process/method through which individuals can be made to feel, reflect and arrive at ideas. New experience could be organized for children in several ways. It could be through a process of storytelling method. Live experiences in the classroom have value at all stages of education. In order to construct their own knowledge, learners need to be actively engaged. Active engagement refers to engagement of body and mind. Learners can be actively engaged only when they are motivated to learn. The very choice of storytelling method encourages the learners to participate and involve themselves. Stories are very motivating, challenging and great fun for children. When children listen to stories in class they share social experience in it. Stories address universal themes which go beyond the useful level of basic dialogues and daily activities. Stories develop children’s learning strategies such as listening for general meaning, predicting, guessing meaning and hypothesizing

Benefits of using stories

The potential of storytelling hold a fascinating for people of all ages. Stories motivate students to read and listen.

- As stories are usually interesting they provide material for teaching and testing listening and reading skills. Therefore it is easier to motivate students in English class room.
- Stories can be used to help learners improve their writing and speaking skills because

stories not only contain useful vocabularies and a variety of sentences but also illustrate aspects of composition such as grammatical cohesion and coherence (Reddy,2010). In *The Storytelling Handbook* (Ellis and Brewster, 1991, p.1) state:

- Stories are motivating and fun; they create a deep interest and a desire to continue learning.
- Listening to stories is a shared social experience; it provokes a shared response of laughter, sadness, excitement and anticipation.
- Stories exercise the imagination; children can become personally involved in a story as they identify with the characters and try to interpret the narrative and illustrations.
- Stories are a useful tool in linking fantasy and the imagination with the child's real world; they provide a way of enabling children to make sense of their everyday life.
- Listening to stories allows the teacher to introduce or revise new vocabulary and sentence structures by exposing the children to language.
- Stories help students of all levels to understand literature, they carry ideological messages.
- Children books offer universal truths, moral appeals to one generation after another.

Story with Pictures

It has often been said that a picture is worth thousand words. Nevertheless, a picture is not only a selection of colours, forms or objects each one has a story behind it. To elicit stories, dialogues and personal information from the learners a teacher only needs to prepare a series of pictures, photos or drawings and go with flow. The visuals is extremely important to students who are naturally shy, silent or lower in the class hierarchy are able to open up in their new identities and find the courage to say what they would normally not dare to do.

Story Telling in Language Classroom

Stories are very important for children in learning their mother tongue, and they are important in learning any foreign language as well. That is why it is good to start using stories in teaching English as soon as possible. Primary school children enjoy listening to stories over and over again. This frequent repetition allows certain language items to be acquired while others are being overtly reinforced. Many stories contain natural repetition of key vocabulary and structures. This helps children to remember every detail, so they can gradually learn to anticipate what is about to happen next in the story. Repetition also encourages participation in the narrative (Ellis and Brewster, 2002:2).

The National Curriculum Framework of NCERT (2005) suggests, Storytelling as a good method in accusing listening skill right from the pre-school education. It covers the ability to pay attention, to value the other person point of view, to stay in touch with the unfolding utterance, and to make flexible hypotheses about the meaning of what is being said. Listening thus forms as complex a web of skills and values as talking does. As a narrative discourse, orally told stories lay the foundations of logical understanding even as they expand the imagination and enhance the capacity to participate vicariously in situations distant from one's life.

Language can be learned by ear; absorption and imitation of the effective and correct speech of teachers provide enjoyable and profitable listening experience for teen agers and adults. Many elements of usage can be learned better by ear than by eye (David.A,2012). This can be fulfilled by reading stories interestingly inside the classroom. Story reading and listening to story reading improves the comprehension skills among students. Stories also provide opportunities for developing continuity in children's learning. They can link English with other subject areas across the curriculum.

Activities using stories

Activity plan: 1

By using a set of visuals and other things such as landscapes, objects, animals etc. it can be easily be used for a group story-writing activity, where each students participates in the story

Activity plan: 2

Children love to listen to a good story as well as to read. The story is read aloud to the class by one and the others listen very interestingly. Once the story has been read, the teacher can high light the themes arising from it.

Activity plan: 3

Pieces of A4 sized paper are folded into six so as to make six boxes. The students are then asked to retell the story using pictures and by drawing them in each box. The students thus make a story board of the main events of the story. One member from each team can retell the part of the story to other groups.

Activity plan: 4

The students can be asked to discuss the main ideas and characters of the story in order to able themselves to give a talk on the story. Group story telling contest can be organized to improve students' speaking skills.

Activity plan: 5

The students can be asked to free-write up their thoughts on the story for a

page. Group story writing contest can be organized to improve students' writing skills.

Teachers Guidance

In telling a story the teacher should be guided by the following

- Suitable stories for the age of the students should be selected
- The stories should be short and the plot easy
- The teachers must know the story well that he wants to narrate
- Language employed in telling a story should be very simple and easy
- A story should be told and not read (permitted for listening skill)
- The teacher himself should like the story and take interest in story telling
- There should be plenty of actions in the stories
- Conversation, if any in the story should be given indirect speech and not in direct (Aggarwal, 2005).

Conclusion

In the light of above, we can say in words, the English language to be taught in our school should be simple and utilitarian. We must endeavour to make our teaching interesting, attractive and inspirational. It is believed that genuine acquisition of language demands activity which selects its own and much less predictable language inputs and outputs. Therefore, it is necessary that the student is engaged in meaningful activities and tasks where language is used to communicate.

Selection as well as organisation of content is closely linked to the stage of mental development of the child and pedagogy assumed. It is obvious that we should choose different types of stories and different topics for secondary school students. Also the sources of stories are different. Students are able to create their own stories if they have the right input. Stories educate, illustrate, enlighten, and inspire. They give relief from the routine and stimulate the mind. They are a great motivator for teachers as well as for students

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