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THE ART OF STORYTELLING for teachers and assistants

'This day gave so many of us the confidence to really explore imaginative speaking and listening skills. And there were a lot of really practical tips on engaging pupils imaginatively.' Alicia Johnson, head teacher.

The ability to fascinate and enchant pupils with a suitable tale is hugely useful in itself. But storytelling is also imaginative communication at its best and all teaching involves elements of it. Even teachers who would not immediately associate what they do with telling tales can learn how to be better and more effective communicators through learning the art and craft of storytelling.

In this flexible workshop, participants can learn

- to understand and use their own and pupils' natural story skills
- how to use verbal and non-verbal language in storytelling
- techniques of pacing stories and engaging young audiences
- what the skills of a good storyteller are
- skills of developing, elaborating and changing plots
- skills of adapting to suit different audiences and ages
- how to play and use story games
- how stories communicate and improve all communication
- how to develop storytelling confidence
- how to develop a repertoire of stories

Ideally a 4-session full day course, effective half-day courses are also possible. Single hour talks cover some of the territory and introduce some of the skills. The course is adaptable for parents and others.

The programme given overleaf an example of the timetable and typical schedule followed at a recent full day INSET session for a primary school cluster.. Timings are flexible and can be adjusted to suit host organizations. The Art of Storytelling can also be adapted to suit parents and various special interest groups.

The Art of Storytelling for teachers and assistants

Arrival and registration from 9.30 a.m.

Session 1. 10.00 a.m. to 11.20 a.m.

The Natural Storyteller

Introductory talk: Natural and developed storytelling skills. How stories and metaphors communicate. Some interesting and relevant elements of the psychology of story. Fun with story games. Three stories.

Activities~:

- Castles in the Air and other visualizing games
- Telling tall tales: story games in duos and small groups.
- Passing it on: sharing short invented stories.

Plenary; Drawing together threads and lessons re. natural storytelling capacities.

Tea/coffee etc. 11.00 to 11.30 a.m.

Session 2. 11.40 a.m. to 1.00 p.m

Learning and imagining stories

Learning stories from key words and skeletons

Using multi-sensory visualization to learn stories

The elements of stories: plots, motifs, intros and endings.

Why not simply memorise? How stories need to be stretched or trimmed to suit time, place, mood, occasion etc.

Activities:

- Learning 5 x stories from outlines (Separate sets for Groups A, B & C)
- Re-telling selected stories in own words one-to-one
- The Embroidery Game: Making stories stretch.
- Further re-telling in small & larger groups
(Members of A with A and B with B)

Lunch 1.00 p.m to 2.00 p.m.

Session 3. 2.00 p.m to 3.15 p.m.

Yarn Spinning

The art of stretching stories. Some general techniques from traditional telling, modern presentation, comedy etc, including The Rule of Three, List Technique, preambles, rambles and asides etc. Using body language. Voice projection, tricks with voice etc. Chorusing, repetition, predictions and various techniques particularly effective with children. Presenting to older children/teenagers. Additional techniques of adapting to time, place, mood etc. Using music and sound effects to enhance telling

Activities:

- Telling and feedback: a) members of A to B and vice versa)
- A Tale of a Tale and/or other games from Yarn Spinning
- The Noise Contraption: sound effects and music for group stories

Tea/coffee etc.: 3.15 to 3.35 p.m.

Session 4. 3.30 to 4.30 p.m.

New Lamps for Old

Using story patterns creatively - transposing traditional plots and motifs. Creating and using story frames. Example stories and improvisations.

- New Lamps for Old (game exercise in transposition of stories)
- Wishes Three: working creatively with a traditional plot
- Smaller group telling again.

Plenary: Putting it all together. Opportunities for some telling to whole group. Final story examples. Recommended reading etc.

Clear handouts allow participants to revisit and consolidate the day's learning and to share it with colleagues. There are usually various CDs and short publications available for purchase on the day by cheque or cash.

Your tutor: *Rob Parkinson has been a professional storyteller since 1984. He is one of the leading professionals working in storytelling education and training in the UK today and is highly skilled in telling tales to large and small audiences of all ages. His work as a storyteller/multi-instrumentalist has been enormously popular in schools and libraries as well as at many public venues and he has made several appearances on national TV and radio. Rob has run training courses for very many teachers and librarians and for all sorts of specialist interest groups, from, counsellors, therapists and healthcare workers to executives in major*

corporations. He has written extensively on the subject of storytelling, story games and stories and is the author of a major book on the subject of change through stories. Various CDs, publications and free downloads of Rob's work are also available from

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