

Reflective learning through storytelling

Storytelling is a widely spread tool in teaching English to young learners and secondary-school learners. It is less common at higher educational establishments though research proves that it is no less cost-effective there.

If we take into consideration the main stages of storytelling (story finding, story telling, story expanding, story processing and story reconstructing), we can clearly see that they correspond to the five stages approach in learning and students reflect on the world around, on themselves and their learning. Storytelling model serves aims of cognition and makes the meaning of the events described in story shared and interpreted. Reasonable and meaningful connections based on students' life and learning experience pave the road from surface to deep learning.

Not to miss the learning opportunities, all questions should be answered and conflicts resolved. But not any type of question is meant. The so called 'known-information questions' guarantee checking surface understanding only. Deep learning is involved by the following types of questions: listing (a kind of brainstorming), imagining, perspective taking, being, relating and transforming questions. The specific features of working with every kind of questions in a formal learning setting are considered at length during the presentation.

Storytelling processes contribute to the development of professional knowledge and skills as any teacher-trainee needs storytelling abilities to explain things at a lesson, to practice students' skills (vocabulary, grammar, speaking and listening comprehension in particular, integrated skills). The role of the storytelling method in developing each of the enumerated skills is analyzed.

The stories that appeal to students are connected with their experience or current interests and often involve emotions. Learning takes place through listening to stories, telling stories and participating in reflective discussions.