

SITUATING STORY TELLING IN SOCIAL SCIENCE CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

Stories are timeless; the stories are as old as human existence. The humans forever have used stories to communicate, to pass on wisdom, and to spur imagination. Stories are basic to human needs as water and food. Stories are fundamental to human connections and most profound form of interaction, cognition, communication, thinking and learning. Humans are story tellers and storytelling is older than history and as old as man's power of speech. The purpose of storytelling varies in broader framework. The same way in Formal Education, Many Teachers create and tell stories, sometimes the purpose is passing on facts and information; sometimes for moral and motivational purpose; sometimes simply for the sheer delight of telling and hearing. This article showcases the importance of storytelling as one of the powerful teaching method in classrooms. Although story telling is basic to all the age groups and with all the subjects but to delimit the paper, I would resituate the power of storytelling in Social Science Classroom. The paper briefly outlines an overview on storytelling method as a pedagogical tool which will help teachers to incorporate story telling tool in teaching processes.

INTRODUCTION

Stories are timeless, the stories are as old as human existence and the fact created the beginning of "history" itself. The humans forever have used stories to communicate, to pass on wisdom, and to spur imagination (Macdonald 1999; Hasse 2018). Stories are basic to human needs as water and food. Thus, because we are living in the world of Stories, we undermine its importance and existence, like fish living inside the water fails to feel, touch and understand what water is. Events were considered worthy and then told, retold from person to person, generation to generation to pass down the knowledge and information. Stories are fundamental to human connections and most profound form of interaction, cognition, communication, thinking and

learning. Humans are story tellers and storytelling is older than history and as old as man's power of speech. The purpose of storytelling varies in broader framework. Sometimes the purpose is passing on facts and information; sometimes for moral and motivational purpose; sometimes simply for the sheer delight of telling and hearing.

In today's 21st Century, in a modern, technically advanced era, one cannot deny the power of storytelling, the oral communication arguably more important than written communication (Rosenberg 1987). Story telling is associated with marketing, business, media, corporate and education at large. The power of stories is well recognized as a multi-million dollar business. This paper briefly outlines the importance of storytelling in the field of Education. There are ample of evidence that suggests humans learn better when content is presented as a story rather than a lecture, for a variety of reasons (Herreid 2007).

Before going further in order to rediscover the relevance of storytelling, as a most powerful teaching method, I would rather clarify some major misleading assumptions about story telling. Firstly, we largely associate storytelling with young children but the fact remains that adults are the largest consumer of stories. Adults consume stories in the form of media, news, religion, politics, ideology, movies, social networking, and so on. So it will not be wrong to justify that people of all age group are living in the world of stories and associated with the stories. Secondly, we associate stories with fiction, falsehood, opposite to the facts and unreal. But the most inspiring and compelling stories are based on real life incidences and stories. Today movies based or inspired by true stories are doing well in the entertainment world. The story of Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Mohammad Ali, MaryKom, SachinTendulkar, Milkha Singh and so on. Real stories are used as one of the most powerful ways to inspire the youth of the nation. Thus, associating stories with fiction means undermining the reality of stories itself. One should never forget the fact that the yesterday's fiction is reality today and today's reality will become fiction of tomorrow. Thirdly, Stories are the heart of all sort of entertainment but stories are much more than entertainment. Stories are wisdom disguised as entertainment. Stories can change the heart; the single thought of a story can change one's course of life. With this understanding, we move further to understand the power of stories in the field of Education or inside the classroom.

STORY TELLING

There is a famous Indian proverb “Tell me a fact and I'll learn. Tell me a truth and I'll believe. But tell me a story and it will live in my heart forever”. The proverb justifies the preference of human being for stories to be conveyed in a narrative form rather than in the form of facts and theories. The Narrative is widely used teaching strategy in the whole world. Long years ago before the advent of ICT in classroom, teachers simply shared their knowledge and information through stories. Classroom is a place to disseminate and construct knowledge and in this context knowledge construction through stories cannot be neglected. Many researchers claim that all knowledge comes in the form of stories (Schank& Abelson, 1995). Stories engage with our creativity, thinking, values, emotions, imaginations to grow at its fullest. Stories are deeply embedded in our mind. Stories make the concept easy, memorable, and understandable.

To understand the use of stories as a powerful pedagogical tool, we need to define what story is. At simplest level, story is a detailed, character-based narration of a character's struggles to overcome obstacles and to reach an important goal. A Story is “sequence of two clauses which are temporally ordered” (Labov 1972). “In order for a story to ‘be,’ there has to be a true dialogue between participants (Cooper 2007).

Story is a series of events and Storytelling is relating with these series of events. In academic story is associated with the term narrative which simply means the same thing. Stories are restored in human mind for longer time. Researches on brain indicated that the creation of images through the use of the spoken word is paramount for learning. Good stories are most meaningful activity in the class. They offer meaning to the listener and the speaker both.

A Story or a narrative is capable of bringing abstract principle to life and to present it in a concrete form. A story narrates the depth to human imagination, thinking, emotions and creativity. Stories provide meaning to life, convey culture, and give a sense of wholeness and belongingness to series of events.

Miller in 2011 has classified three kinds of stories. The three kinds of stories are:

- Personal Experience stories- These stories are based on sharing personal experiences, incidences that are considered to be important and interesting, and an act of moral persuasion.
- Traditional stories–These traditional stories includes Folktale, Legend, Epic, and Mythology.

- Created stories – Created stories are created based on personal experiences stories and traditional stories.

Storytelling is one of the oldest art form used for explaining and understanding the world inside and outside the classroom. The speaker and listener in story telling gets fully involved and engaged. Storytelling is an important form of pedagogy, its logic offers students to immediately pay attention and emotionally involved in it which offers content retention for a longer time period. Storytelling is a process, in which the teller is using mental imagery, narrative structure, and vocalization or singing, communicates with other humans (the audience) who also use mental imagery and, in turn, communicate back to the teller primarily via body language and Facial expressions, resulting in the co-creation of a story (Roney 2009).

STORY TELLING IN CLASSROOM

In academic story is associated with the term narrative which means the same thing. Narration is widely used educational teaching strategy in all over the world. In Education narratives are used in two ways; Firstly as an educational strategy and secondly narration as a piece of research.

The history of storytelling in the classroom showcased the concerns for story telling in the educational context. Burrell (1926) stated that “coaching for storytellers is at present almost unknown: but it is a very important desideratum for all who are concerned with the training of children. Horne (1916) stated about the undermining the importance of storytelling to all grade learners. The focus shifted to only primary age students. But recently ideas of storytelling has become alive and again gained it momentum. The story telling institutes are growing at Global levels which are showcasing the importance of stories in improving teaching and learning process at large. Story telling institutes are providing coaching to become story tellers. Story telling worldwide is coming together as a platform of sharing ideas in the form of storytelling festival began in 1973 in Jonesborough, Tennessee. Since then plethora of literature on storytelling teaching methods has started evolving. In India, The Indian story telling network was founded in 2011 to be based upon India's myriad splendid ancient Storytelling traditions. The Network is dedicated to developing ways of stories and storytelling as a powerful educational tool and teaching method.

Stories Provide a Structure to Content: A good narrative presents the overall content as a whole and not presents the concept in fragmented and isolated manner. Stories create a vivid mental

image in the mind of listener and speaker both. Through stories natural connections are made between events and concepts. The abstract concepts can be visualized and linked through story telling in a classroom. Stories are easy way to open the gateway to information. Story telling can make abstract concept easy and simple. Stories provide a joyful environment to students, allows them to relax, interact and question in a meaningful way. Stories make it easy to share learning experiences and make the subject alive and fruitful. Storytelling works as a stimulus to generate Creativity and Imagination in a classroom. This interactive process encourages critical thinking capabilities.

Types of Story Telling:In a classroom, Library Storytelling and Traditional Storytelling are two basic distinct type of storytelling (Green 2010). Story telling in Library engages students with oral literature, imaginations, provides reading guidance. These story tellers were interpreters of various literature and cultural heritage. Traditional storytelling is an art of interaction with the use of actions, gestures, and actions to reveal the elements and images of a story while encouraging the listener's imagination. Through such story telling a teacher can communicate abstract and complex ideas, knowledge and information to students. The most influential type of storytelling in which children are engaged is Digital Story telling. In Digital Story telling narratives are coordinated with sound, image and imaginations. In the world of technological sound students, digital storytelling is one of the effective ways of communication.

In Social Science Classroom: Story in Social Science is natural Fit Pedagogy. Social Studies in school curriculum focus on constructing and taking perspectives. In all the content areas, perspective is integrated and important components. The word story itself is a part of history which is a key component of social science in school education.

In Social Science classrooms, stories help to make meaningful associations with the character, events, and time. Through stories a teacher can illuminate the values in each person's life and demonstrate value in the blending of everyone's strengths (Rogers, 2013).

A well told story in a social science classroom can create a sense of community and belonging in learning communities better than most traditional teaching methods (Richter, 2000). Community centeredness is one of the aims of social science learning. The information can be immersed with

visual imagery through personal and social connections with storytelling. Hence, storytelling approach will make easy to retain information for learners. Story telling helps in promoting character identification and improves understanding, and adds experiential benefits to teaching strategies.

Storytelling is helpful in making connections with cultural knowledge. It helps in making sense of understanding different cultures, languages and oral narratives. These narrative voices create a strong connection between storytelling and social science in Education. Through real stories of great leaders or personalities, one can help children to become compassionate citizen committed to social welfare and culturally sensitive decisions. When children learn from other stories, they learn universal values, cultural values and acknowledge the dignity of every human being. There is a strong connection between arts, social science and storytelling.

Storytelling increases student's comprehension, thinking, reading and other cognitive abilities. It encourages better comprehension, vocabulary, and long range thinking. Storytelling enriches learning experiences, makes student more confident and strengthen the cognitive and affective skills and areas. Educators can use storytelling to involve, instruct, introduce concepts, and celebrate cultures and so on. Story telling can become one of the effective tools in professional development Story telling is a gift which every teacher can use in a classroom. Teacher must develop efficiency in becoming a good story teller. If we want our students to sense the world , the best solution is using story telling method . The old and new world both can be imagined through storytelling to fulfill individual and social needs of an individual.

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