



TEACHING DIFFERENT SKILLS THROUGH STORIES IN ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

The article focuses on the importance of stories in teaching English. Highlights the benefits and drawbacks of using stories in teaching speaking, writing and vocabulary.

Stories have long been recognized as a powerful tool for language teaching, particularly with English language learners (ELLs). In this article, we explore the use of stories as a foreign language teaching technique with ELLs, including its benefits and challenges.

• Benefits of Teaching English Through Stories:

According to research, teaching English through stories can have several benefits. One of the main advantages of this method is that stories provide an authentic context for language learning. Through stories, learners are exposed to natural language and a variety of language structures that they can use in real-life situations. Moreover, stories can enhance learners' vocabulary, comprehension, and speaking skills.

In addition, stories are a powerful tool for engaging learners emotionally and intellectually. Stories can motivate learners to learn, and they can help learners to connect with the language on a deeper level. Furthermore, stories can provide a window into different cultures and ways of life, thus promoting intercultural awareness and understanding.

• Drawbacks of Teaching English Through Stories:

Despite the benefits, there are also some drawbacks to teaching English through stories. One of the main challenges is selecting the appropriate story for a particular level and age group. Stories that are too complex or too simple can discourage learners or fail to challenge them. Another challenge is ensuring that the story is culturally appropriate and does not offend learners' beliefs or values.

Another drawback is that stories may not always provide a clear focus on language learning. Without proper guidance and support, learners may focus more on the story content than on the language itself, and they may miss opportunities to develop their language skills.

• Ways of Using Stories in the Language Classroom:

To address the challenges of teaching English through stories, teachers can use strategies such as pre-teaching vocabulary, focusing on language structures, and incorporating follow-up activities. For example, teachers can introduce key vocabulary before reading a story, and ask learners to identify and practice using the vocabulary in context. Teachers can also focus on specific language structures, such as verb tenses or reported speech, and ask learners to identify and practice using them in the story.

Moreover, teachers can use follow-up activities to reinforce learning and extend learners' language skills. For example, teachers can ask learners to retell the story in their own words, write a summary of the story, or create a dialogue based on the story.

- Role of Stories in Teaching Writing:

Stories can also be used to improve learners' writing skills by providing them with models of good writing. By analyzing the structure, style, and language of stories, learners can improve their own writing skills. Stories can be used to teach different writing techniques, such as using vivid imagery, developing characters, and creating tension and conflict.

Moreover, stories can inspire learners to create their own stories, helping them to develop their creativity and imagination. By writing their own stories, learners can practice different writing skills, such as organizing ideas, developing characters, and using descriptive language.

According to the study results by Miller focused on using storytelling as a way to teach writing skills: The researchers found that storytelling helped students to develop their creativity and critical thinking skills, which in turn improved their ability to write more engaging and effective pieces¹.

Gallets² indicated that in storytelling one person relates the story from memory to a different person or a group. The teller acts as a transmitter and the listener(s) as a receiver of thoughts and ideas with interaction between the two. Young children listen to stories and other narratives and subsequently incorporate them in their writing through drafting, sharing, or editing. In this regard, Hana³ found that storytelling promotes listening skills and listening comprehension, fosters imagination, as well as improves vocabulary usage and writing techniques among pupils and the interaction between pupils and between pupils and teachers. Aida⁴ also indicated that storytelling is particularly effective in terms of improving listening and writing skills among pupils.

- Role of Stories in Teaching Speaking:

Stories can be used to improve learners' speaking skills by providing them with opportunities to practice speaking in a natural and authentic way. Teachers can use stories to encourage learners to express their opinions, share their experiences, and engage in discussions. By discussing and analyzing characters, events, and themes in stories, learners can practice different speaking skills such as describing characters, retelling events, and predicting outcomes.

¹ Miller, L. C. (2010). *Make me a story: Teaching writing through digital storytelling*. Stenhouse Publishers

² Gallets, M. (2005). *Storytelling and Story Reading: A Comparison of Effects and Children's Memory and Story Comprehension*. MA Thesis. Tennessee: East Tennessee State University.

³ Hana, N. (2010). *The Effectiveness of Using Storytelling Technique to Develop EFL Listening Skills of The Primary Stage Students*. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Egypt: Mansoura University.

⁴ Aida, Y. (2007). *Quantities and Qualitative Analyses of Students' Views on the Storytelling Project*. Paper presented at the CJKP Proceedings Conference.

Even when the students were in the teaching and learning process, the students rarely spoke the English language. Jianing⁵ writes the factor discouraging the students are:

- (1) they are nervous and afraid in making mistakes,
- (2) they are not used to the topics,
- (3) the classroom atmosphere is not push the students to speak out,
- (4) the listeners give unsupportive responses.

- Role of Stories in Teaching Vocabulary:

Teachers can find any technique to help the students' speaking problems; one of them is storytelling. About this way we will discuss in the next paragraph.

Stories are a powerful tool for teaching vocabulary because they provide an authentic context for language learning. By presenting words in context, learners can better understand their meaning and usage. Stories also provide opportunities for learners to encounter and practice new vocabulary in a variety of situations and contexts, making it easier to remember and use the words in real-life situations.

Moreover, stories can provide a rich source of collocations, idiomatic expressions, and phrasal verbs that are often difficult to learn through traditional vocabulary instruction. By exposing learners to natural language usage in stories, they can learn these more complex and nuanced aspects of vocabulary that are essential for effective communication. Another educative impact of stories is that learners may sit around the teacher who tells or reads a story. Bafile argues that this creates a comfortable group atmosphere⁶. Wright believes that this changes the relationship between the teacher and learners in a positive way⁷.

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⁵ Xu Jianing(2007) Storytelling in the EFL Speaking classroom. *The Internet TESL Journal*, Vol. XIII, No. 11, November 2007

⁶ Bafile, C. (2003). Shared reading: Listening leads to fluency and Understanding.

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