

Storytelling in Teaching Economics

V. Brinia

Dpt. of Management Science and Technology, Athens University of Economics and Business,
Athens, Greece

E-mail: vbrinia@aueb.gr

DOI: 10.6007/IJARBSS/v5-i10/1857 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v5-i10/1857>

Abstract

Storytelling is a very important tool at all levels of education. It increases the verbal and the writing skills of the students, while it strengthens the critical thinking and the abilities for analysis and synthesis of information. More specifically, the storytelling (including creating, listening and understanding a story) leads the student to practice advanced communication skills through structuring content, processing information and drawing meaning. The pedagogical nature of storytelling is further enhanced with the ability to effectively support the transmission of concepts, knowledge, values and attitudes and to help people to make decisions about their life based on the examples of the heroes of these stories. In this research the contribution of storytelling in the learning process is presented.

Keywords: Storytelling, Education, Narrative

1. Introduction

Storytelling is the interactive art of using words and actions for the representation of data and images of a story in a way that stimulates the imagination of the listener. (National Storytelling Network).

The first appearance of this technique is with the beginning of humanity and historically represents the first attempt of the oral formulation of a story. According to Joseph Campbell, the first form of storytelling is myths, stories told by our ancestors to record and pass on important events and developments of the time to the younger generations. Usually, the content of myths was intended to glorify a hero to convey important events or to highlight patterns of human behavior. For many cultures of humanity, developed at different times, the storytelling was a form of communication and a means of teaching the younger generations. However, beyond the transfer of knowledge, cultural values, attitudes and values, the storytelling was used by people in their attempt to harmonize with the environment and to understand the human being. Mostly, the storytelling is used as a recreational vehicle that raise interest, pleases and audiovisual activates the listener. However, despite its entertaining role, the storytelling has been widely applied in education as a primary means of education in the respective educational systems and has drawn increasing attention to educational research.

The storytelling first appeared in the form of spoken language, rich with expressions and body gestures. However, one of the first stages of the storytelling is met in the form of drawings engraved on cave walls. Later, with the advent of writing, the stories began to be recorded and transmitted from generation to generation through stories, the most widely known form of storytelling. Over the years, and human progress, the stories began to increasingly acquire visualized form, in the form of photographs represented in materials such as canvas, wood or metal, and subsequently recorded in the form of films in digital format.

2. Storytelling in education

From its appearance, until now, the storytelling is a widely used educational strategy, as it has been established that it attracts and helps consolidate information from learners, since people can remember and recall more easily information they received through a story, especially if the story is related to existing knowledge and experiences of learners. According to Matthews (1977), the encoding method and presentation of the learning object, can significantly affect the ability of people to memorize and recall it in the future. Through storytelling, stories and events are transmitted to students, yielding effectively the plot and the meaning of history, supporting the acquisition of true knowledge.

Storytelling is a very important tool at all levels of education, as it has been shown to increase the oral and the written skills of the learners, while strengthening their critical thinking, analysis and synthesis of information. More specifically, the storytelling (including creating, listening and understanding a story) leads the student to practice advanced communication skills through structuring content, processing of information and drawing meaning. The pedagogical nature of storytelling is enhanced further with the ability to effectively support the transmission of concepts, knowledge, values and attitudes and to help people to make decisions about their life based on the examples of the heroes of these stories.

The contribution of storytelling in learning is summarized in the following three dimensions of human nature and behavior:

2.1 Social dimension

The storytelling is usually conducted before a live audience. During the storytelling, the narrator interacts with listeners in a natural environment (eg classroom) in the form of questions and answers. The response of the audience, is often taken into account by the narrator who varies the story lines. The audience follows the tale and creates images based on the words of the listener; furthermore, the style and moves of the narrator can turn the storytelling into an experiential communicative act. During the storytelling the narrator and audience coexist in the same group and develop mutual relations. This relationship is enhanced by the exchange of personal experiences and perceptions in the form of stories.

2.2 Emotional dimension

The stories have been used extensively throughout the course of human existence emphasizing in their educational character, mainly because of their ability to create feelings and emotions to

the listener. Through the composition and narration of a story, the narrator externalizes and communicates his feelings to the audience. The mode of narration of a story (narrative), can create strong emotional involvement of the audience in the story, who may be identified with one of the protagonists of the story. Through the narrative, the learners gradually learn to manage and communicate feelings.

2.3 Cognitive dimension

Through the process of storytelling, learners improve their oral and written communication skills and high thinking skills like the collection and processing of information for problem solving. The process of storytelling enhances creativity and imagination of both the narrator (who combines scenarios in an educational purpose), and of listeners (who, based in the words, they create images of the story).

Therefore, according to Gersie, storytelling can contribute to the effectiveness of the educational process as follows:

1. Useful tool for the development of appropriate, friendly and pleasant educational environment
2. Medium for transferring information, knowledge, values and attitudes.

3. Basic principles of successful storytelling in education

According to the model proposed by Larry Brooks, all the stories which are subject to storytelling should support each of the following principles in order to experience success, to please the listener and effectively communicate their main points. This model can be used by prospective narrators to build and establish good storytelling. The principles proposed are:

1. **Basic Idea:** The idea on which the rest of the story is built. Each story must possess a common message that wants to convey. This idea must be acknowledged from the beginning, in order for the pieces of story that will be added, to be aligned with the purpose.
2. **Characters / Heroes:** Every story should have its protagonists. The main heroes and their role in history should be clearly demonstrated.
3. **Subject:** Every story must have an appropriate theme (scenario) to highlight the main idea of the story.
4. **Structure:** Special emphasis should be given to the order / sequence of events of the story (ie what part comes first, what second, etc.)
5. **Visualization:** In traditional narrative, the narrator should emphasize in the presentation of the story, the expressiveness of the body and face, the movements and the interaction with the audience or other objects that may be involved.
6. **Sound:** Finally, a particularly important factor to attract the interest of the audience and the effective use of a story is the expressiveness that is found in the words / voice of the narrator. Each story must be "dressed" appropriately with sound / tone and voice timbre, to attract the interest and maximize the efficient transmission of messages and emotions to the audience and create a climate of communication.

4. Lesson's design

Course Information

- Course: Principles of Business Management and Services
- Title: 1.2.1 The company – Introduction
- Grade: 3rd grade of High School

1. Teaching objectives

After the completion of the lesson the students must be able to:

- i. Understand the concept of business
- ii. To distinguish the basic elements of business

2. Teaching methods

Lecture, dialogue, storytelling

3. Teaching tools

Photocopies, table, chalk, projector

4. Brief description of teaching lesson

- Introduction to the concept of business through images to activate the students' interest.
- Key points of the business:
 - Production Elements
 - Innovation
 - Risk of Failure
- Exercise – Implementation
- Summary

5. Detailed description of teaching stages

- Preparation (5 min)
 - We show images using the projector and we ask the students: “What do you think the images depict?”
 - Then we write the word “BUSINESS” on the board.
- Presentation (9 min)

Content	Method	Means
Definition of business	Dialogue, questions/answers	Projector, Board
Key points of the business: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production Elements • Innovation • Risk of Failure 	Presentation, Dialogue, questions/answers, Examples	Board, photocopies

- Application/Exercise (24 min)

The story is given to the students and are asked in groups to answer some questions like: What are the key elements of the business? More specifically, which inputs are used, if there was innovation in business and if so, what was it and finally what was the element of risk?

- Evaluation (4 min)

Evaluation sheet is distributed

- Summary (3 min)

Summary of the key points of the lesson

References

Campbell, J., Moyers, B. D., & Flowers, B. S. (2012). *The Power of Myth*. Turtleback Books.

Gersie, A. (1992). *Earthtales: storytelling in times of change*. Green Print.

Matthews-DeNatale, G. (2008) *Digital Storytelling: tips and resources* (Boston, MA: Simmons College.

Nanson, A. (2005). *Storytelling and Ecology: reconnecting nature and people through oral narrative*. Glamorgan: University of Glamorgan Press.

Roberts, L. C. (1997). From knowledge to narrative: educators and the changing museum, author’s synopsis. *Visitor Behavior*, 12(1), 2.

Salmon, C. (2007). *Storytelling: la machine à fabriquer des histoires et à formater les esprits*. La Découverte.

Zabel, M. K. (1991). Storytelling, myths, and folk tales: Strategies for multicultural inclusion. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, 36(1), 32-34.