



ONCE UPON A TIME: STORYTELLING AS A TOOL FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

Friday, 9:30-10:45 AM February 3, 2017

Sponsored by the Kaneb Center for Teaching and Learning

Presented by **Wakonse Fellows** Andre Audette, Patrick Clauss, Elena Mangione-Lora, and Chris Clark,
With video guest Brittany Flokstra of the University of Northern Iowa (also a Wakonse fellow)
Learn about Wakonse at <http://kaneb.nd.edu/programs/wakonse-fellows/>

Key takeaway: *Stories are powerful tools for teaching and learning.*

Agenda

- Beginning
 - Patrick - Illustration & Deconstruction
 - Functions of stories, Hooks
 - Brittany (video) - story example
- Middle
 - Elena - Bind and bond individuals
 - Pedagogy & psychology
- End
 - Andre - Illustration & Provocation
 - Ending your story

Follow-up resources – <http://tinyurl.com/h8w8afr>

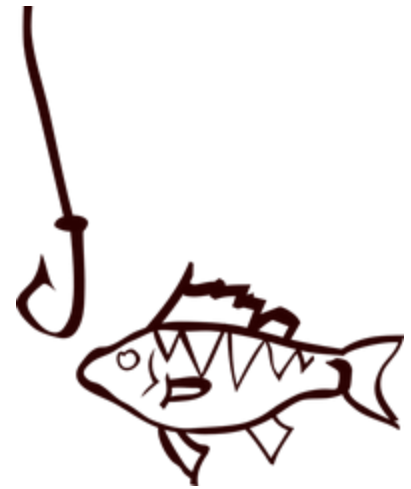
ONCE UPON A TIME: STORYTELLING AS A TOOL FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

<h2>Functions</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Illustration - provide an outright example● Metaphor - explain something indirectly● Deconstruction - take apart in order to understand (e.g., case-based learning)● Touchstone - provide a reference point to which something can be compared● Provocation - motivate discussion or debate	
<h2>Modes</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Telling live - in person, in class● Reading/watching - published stories, case studies, TED talk videos● Creating new - students produce their own stories	<h2>Media</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Voice● Print● Digital
<h2>Elements</h2> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Beginning - introduces the HERO (protagonist) and a problem / challenge / need<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ HOOK - grab your audience’s attention with a fact, statement, question or image - surprise, provoke, or shock them - arouse their curiosity - ask them to imagine.○ Antagonist / enemy / other side2. Middle - the hero works to solve the problem, meet the challenge, satisfy the need<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Conflict / confrontation / obstacle○ Climax / turning point / moment of discovery3. End - the hero resolves the central issue (or doesn’t)<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Call to action - what the listener can (or should) do now	

THE HOOK

A hook is designed to grab attention. The idea is to









1. Entice interest in an film, product, story, or creative work and
2. Keep people reading, listening, or watching so that they
3. Buy into what you're selling (figuratively or literally).



Here are some examples from the movies:

- A man is about to commit suicide when an angel shows him what his town would be like if he had never lived. (It's a Wonderful Life)
- A lawyer suddenly loses his ability to lie. (Liar Liar)
- Jamaicans start an Olympic bobsled team where there is no snow. (Cool Runnings)
- There's a bomb on a crowded city bus. If it slows below 50, the bomb goes off. (Speed)

8 GREAT HOOKS

- | | | |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| STORY |  | Usually a personal story that relates to the subject at hand. It humanizes the speaker and gives them credibility on a subject. |
| VIDEO/GRAPHIC |  | Pictures can be worth a thousand words and grab your audience at the same time. They are useful to carry through the theme of your talk. |
| BELIEF STATEMENT |  | A pithy statement that captures your views on the topic, and entices the audience to come along on the journey with you. |
| INTRIGUING STRUCTURE |  | Laying out the highs and lows (and the path between) of your story upfront, can create a sense of drama. |
| HUMOR |  | Difficult to pull off, in the right hands it's a mixture of a provocative statement and a surprise, wrapped together and delivered well. |
| RHETORICAL QUESTION |  | A way to get the audience thinking and bring them into your presentation easily. "What's your vision...?" |
| PROVOCATIVE STATEMENT |  | The edgier kissing cousin to the belief statement, it's a stimulating point of view that opens up the presentation. |
| SHOCK/SURPRISE |  | Get your audience on the edge of their seats (in a good way) and hearts thumping, with a shock or surprise (particularly a fact). |

From "Set Your Hook" by Gavin McMahon <http://pt.slideshare.net/powerfulpoint>



WAYS TO END A STORY

Resolution — tie up the loose ends neatly, sort out the conflicts

vs.

No resolution — make the audience imagine their own ending or set up a sequel

- Twist provide a surprise or new info, make “facts” turn out to be false
- Epiphany at the darkest moment, have someone/thing serve as inspiration
- Return have the main character go back to their old ways
- Question get people talking and thinking about possible answers
- Climax end at the key moment and don’t explain what happens next
- Implied hold back information and leave multiple explanations possible
- Call to action appeal to the audience to do something specific
- Moral explain the story’s lesson about good behavior
- Epilogue tell what happens long after the climax / resolution

From “[How to Write Satisfying Story Endings](#)” by William Victor:

1. Show (or suggest) the result of the story's conflict
2. Effective endings come from the main character's actions
3. Use elements from the story's beginning and middle
4. Make the reader feel something

One popular piece of advice is to end your story sooner rather than later; don’t let it drag on.

TELLING GREAT STORIES WITH DATA

1. Think of Your Analysis as a Story—Use a Story Structure

- Find the story first: explore the data
- Determine what you want people to do as a result
- Write out the “story board” for your audience

2. Be Authentic... Your Story Will Flow

- Make it personal, make it emotional
- Start with metaphor or anecdote
- Develop with data: authenticity is rooted in facts and facts are rooted in data
- Supplement hard data with qualitative data

3. Be Visual—Think of Yourself as a Film Editor

- Use pictures, graphs, charts when possible
- Design your graphs and charts for instant readability but allow for layers of meaning as the graph is studied

4. Make It Easy for Your Audience and You

- Telling a story should be simple and direct. Recall and action will be that much stronger
- Stick to 2-3 key issues and how they relate to your audience
- No hoop jumping

5. Invite and Direct Discussion

- Focus on highlighting what the audience needs
- Highlight key facts that relate to the story—the current state, rate of change, a key number. How does this link to story’s trend?
- Extend the story parameters into questions
- Invite them to continue the discussion via group discussion, blogs, intranets, newsgroups

Source: a white paper by Elissa Fink and Susan Moore, Tableau Software at tinyurl.com/ztb2ayg



Familiar stories are trusted. Unfamiliar stories may have to work to establish trust.

Don't censor the drama of a real-life story. Taking out the 'bad bits' damages trust.

TRUST IN THE TELLER

Our feelings about a storyteller influence our reaction to their story.



FAMILIARITY

The more familiar a story feels, the more powerful it is.

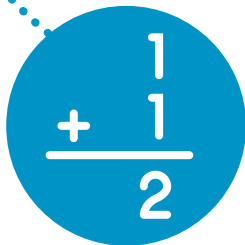
It's easier to fill in the gaps if a story is familiar.



AGENCY

Stories are most persuasive when readers work out their meaning for themselves.

Tell a simple story so people reach the conclusions you want them to.



SIMPLICITY

Simple stories are strong stories. Take out everything that doesn't serve the narrative.



WHAT REALLY MAKES A GOOD STORY?

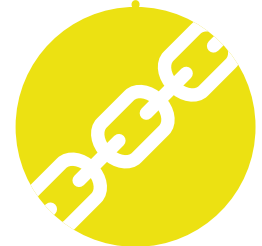
STORYTELLING has become one of the most popular techniques of marketing communication. *It's a very effective way to engage audiences, convey information and influence people without using overt persuasion.* This graphic shows the characteristics of great stories, as found by academic researchers and professional writers.



DRAMA

Stories need dramatic development and emotional dynamics.

Real life has ups and downs, so people relate to stories with drama.



RELATABILITY

The more people identify with a story, the more likely they are to be persuaded.

People are drawn into stories they can relate to.



IMMERSION

The more readers put themselves into a story, the more likely they are to change their opinions.



RESEARCH

Independent, published research on the positive link
between oral storytelling and academic success

"Oh, Yeah? Says Who?" By KENDALL HAVEN, PhD.

This article first appeared in the *September/October 2009 Storytelling Magazine* and is re-printed here with permission from Dr. Haven.

Dozens of books proclaim storytelling works classroom wonders. Hundreds extol the unsurpassed benefits of story. However, such vague and sweeping claims leave questions and doubts swirling in their wake. Does rigorous research support the contention that storytelling is a powerful and effective tool for classroom teaching?

I wrote my book, *Story Proof*, to present evidence supporting the use of story. Here, I focus on research supporting storytelling with six reasons for teachers to make storytelling a greater part of teaching. Remember, these are just demitasse sips from the great mug of relevant research. The International Storytelling Center holds the complete research files.

Storytelling improves student comprehension.

- Lehr and Osborn (see references) showed storytelling is far easier for students to comprehend than the same information presented in expository forms.
- Trostle compared storytelling to story reading by measuring both vocabulary development and comprehension. She found telling stories to primary grade students improved vocabulary and comprehension faster.
- Cooper found student comprehension scores were 50 percent higher for information presented in story form than for similar information presented in expository forms. The Texas Education Association and
- National Reading Panel reinforced these findings.

Storytelling improves logical thinking and cross curriculum learning.

- From Polkinghorne, "Storytelling has value in science, therapy, history, fiction, natural science, human science, etc. Storytelling is universal." Research indicates math skills increase when young children are exposed to storytelling. In addition, storytelling skills predate, and are precursors to, logical thinking development.
- Coles tested college pre-med students finding, "Stories enhanced and accelerated virtually every measurable aspect of learning." Dozens of prominent researchers confirmed this through their individual studies.

Storytelling improves literacy and language mastery.

- Mello reported on ten major studies of elementary students. "Each study documented storytelling enhanced literacy."
- Cliatt and Shaw concluded, "The relationship of storytelling and successful children's literacy development is well established."
- Snow and Burns' examination concluded, "Recently the efficacy of early storytelling exposure has been scientifically validated. It has been shown to work to develop language skills."
- Bransford and Brown demonstrated early oral language activity (storytelling and story listening) is key to development of various brain centers which control language recognition, word generation, speech, and reading.

~Over~

Contact info@spellbinders.org or call 970-544-2389 to explore whether there is a volunteer
Spellbinders storyteller available for your classroom.

Storytelling improves student writing success.

- Engel concluded, "Storytelling is an essential precursor to mastery of expository and logical forms." Moss and Stott added, "Grade school students were better able to ... construct all forms of narratives after exposure to storytelling."
- Studies prove teaching storytelling structure to students improves writing skills for all types of writing. Simply listening to told stories teaches effective narrative structure to students.

Storytelling enhances student memory.

- Murdock says, "Memory plays a central role in cognitive processes of attention, perception, problem solving, thinking, and reasoning."
- Schank found that index labels controlling memory processes in the minds of listeners are triggered by storytelling. Forty other studies agree. Delivering key information in story form improves student ability to remember and to accurately recall information.

Storytelling improves oral language mastery and ability.

- Cooper concluded from industry leader surveys, "... researchers have found potential employers want their employees to have mastered two aspects of literacy often omitted from school curricula: listening and speaking."
- Kahan stated, "Storytelling is increasingly seen as an important tool for communicating explicit and especially tacit knowledge, not just information, but know-how."
- Numerous other studies link oral language skill development to reading and writing skill development. Work in any one of these language arts areas develops them all.

Conclusions

Any curriculum information will be learned better and more effectively if presented within the context of stories. Teachers can easily mold and adapt storytelling processes to fit their abilities, material, and students. Involving students early and often with storytelling, story listening, story reading, and story writing improves logical thinking and mathematical thinking as well as comprehension and writing skills. Is storytelling a powerful and effective tool for your classroom? "Not only, yes, but, hell, yes!"

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Kendall Haven (www.kendallhaven.com) is a senior research scientist turned award-winning author and storyteller. He is an expert on the structure of stories, on the process of writing, and on the use of stories in education. He has performed at more than 40 national conferences and festivals, and has published 24 books and dozens of articles, including his most recent publication, *Story Proof: The Science Behind the Startling Power of Story*.