



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

Tuesday, 9:30-10:45 AM Jan 26 and Apr 5, 2016

Sponsored by the Kaneb Center for Teaching and Learning

Presented by the **2015 Wakonse Fellows** - Andre Audette, Chris Clark, Patrick Claus,
Karen Hooge Michalka, Elena Mangione-Lora, Paul McDowell, and Joe Michalka.

Learn about Wakonse at <http://kaneb.nd.edu/programs/wakonse-fellows/>

Stories are powerful vehicles for carrying all kinds of messages. In this session you will hear several sample stories and learn about ways in which stories have been used to enhance learning. You will also learn to identify the key elements of a story and begin to outline a story that you can use in your own teaching.

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

Agenda

1. Dramatic story (Paul)
2. Key elements of stories (Joe)
3. Activity: sharing stories (Elena)
4. A classroom story (Patrick)
5. Stories and teaching (Andre, Karen, Chris)
6. Activity: identify the parts of a story (Chris)
7. Workshop: outline a story or connect one to a class
8. Debriefing (Chris)

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Story Formats in Teaching and Learning

- Instructor or student tells a story (live, in person)
- Class consumes a published story (reading / watching / listening)
- Student creates a story

(any of these can involve text, live speech, and/or media)

Functions/Applications of Stories in Teaching and Learning

- Metaphor - explain something indirectly
- Illustration - provide an outright example
- Deconstruction - take something apart in order to understand it (as in case-based learning)
- Touchstone - provide a reference point to which something can be compared
- Provocation - motivate discussion or debate

Classic Elements of a Story

1. Beginning - introduces the hero (protagonist) and a problem / challenge / need
 - Hook - a technique designed to grab attention
 - Antagonist / enemy / other side
2. Middle - the hero works to solve the problem, meet the challenge, satisfy the need
 - Conflict or confrontation - obstacle to overcome
 - Climax, turning point, moment of discovery
3. End - the hero resolves the central issue (or doesn't)
 - Call to action - what the listener can (or should) do now

Keys to an Effective Story

- **Emotional** - it appeals to listeners' feelings
- **Relatable** - listeners can identify with it
- **Simple** - it's not hard for listeners to understand, the point is clear

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Selected Resources

live links @ tinyurl.com/h8w8afr

- [Stories and Anecdotes in the Chemistry Classroom](#), Deborah Folino (2001)
- [The Story of the Storytelling Project](#), Lee Anne Bell (2009)
- [Teacher storytelling](#), Melody Shank (2006)
- [Characteristics of a Good Story](#), Dave Hood (2010)
- [The Hero's Journey](#) (from *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* - Campbell, 1949)
- [The Art of Digital Storytelling](#), Bernajean Porter (2005)
- [Storytelling techniques for engaging presentations](#), Ffion Lindsay (2014)
- [What Listening to a Story Does to Our Brains](#), Leo Widrich (2012)
- [The Psychology of Storytelling](#), Gregory Ciotti (2014)
- [Fact Sheet: Research in support of storytelling](#), Kendall Haven (2009)

eBooks through Hesburgh Library

- [Resonate](#), Nancy Duarte (Wiley 2010)
- [Story Smart](#), Kendall Haven (Libraries Unlimited 2014)

Media

- [What makes a really good story](#), Wendy Chan Design / ABC Copywriting (2013)
- [Ken Burns on Story](#) (Redglass Pictures 2012)

Examples

- [Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The danger of a single story](#) (TED 2009)
- [Brené Brown: The power of vulnerability](#) (TEDxHouston 2010)
- [Jill Bolte Taylor: My stroke of insight](#) (TED 2008)
- [Naturally Obsessed](#) (Rifkind & Rifkind 2009) - the lab of Prof. Lawrence Shapiro
- [Choked](#), Milligan & Wayner (2012)
- [Origami](#) (2013), [The Story of Sarah & Juan](#) (2015) - Commercials by Energy BBDO
- Animated short films
 - [The Monk & The Monkey](#), Carroll & Giroladini (2010)
 - [Oktapodi](#), Gobelins L'Ecole de L'Image (2007)
 - [One Man Band](#), Pixar (2005)
- Audio from the Third Coast International Audio Festival
 - [The Trap](#), David Maxon (2007)
 - [\(Bicycle\) Chain of Missing Links](#), Matt Purdy (2010)
 - [Glass, Not Glitter](#), Abby Wendle (2012)

Ph.D. candidates - check out the [Three Minute Thesis \(3MT\)](#) competition

Also - [How grad students can effectively tell their research story](#), Jackie Amsden

STORYBOARD

BEGINNING - setup

Hero / protagonist -

Problem / challenge / need -

MIDDLE - rising action

Conflict / confrontation / obstacle -

Antagonist / enemy / other side -

MIDDLE - climax

Turning point or moment of discovery -

END - resolution

Call to action -

A large vertical rectangle divided into four horizontal sections, corresponding to the story stages: Beginning, Middle (rising action), Middle (climax), and End (resolution). Each section is currently empty, intended for drawing or writing.



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*.