

TALES, Stories for Learning in European Schools - State of the Art

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Introduction

In the next pages we will try to give an overview of the present situation concerning the use of stories and storytelling as an educational tool at school and in teacher training and the presence of storytelling and storytelling techniques in the teacher training curriculum. Therefore, the project partners analysed the curricula in their own country/organisation.

In order to have a better, realistic view on what really happens we launched a survey in all the partner countries in which we addressed active teachers, teacher trainees and trainers and also professional storytellers.

Results

A. Survey

The aim of the questionnaire was to gather information about using stories and storytelling techniques in learning. The questionnaire consisted of questions whose aim was to ascertain how interested and ready active teachers (in primary or secondary classroom practice), **teacher trainees and trainers** were to test and apply their knowledge in this field.

The main questions for teachers (including students and lecturers) were:

- Is storytelling (as a didactic tool) a part of the teacher training course in your organization?
- Are you interested in storytelling as an educational tool? Have you developed or have you been looking for useful material in this respect?

In addition, **professional storytellers** were also asked about their experience.

The questionnaire was compiled on the basis of the theoretical viewpoints on storytelling. It was carried out with the programme Survey Monkey. All the partners participating in the project sent the questionnaire to the target group in their country with an explanation and a request to answer the questions.

The questionnaire was carried out in order to contribute to the quality of the project work and products.

1. The results of the questions for teachers/trainers

The questions are structured according to target group next to a set of questions concerning good practice material (see below).

Q 1 - 5: Personal data

Q 6 - 9: Storytelling in Teacher Training

Q 10 -12: Storytelling in the classroom

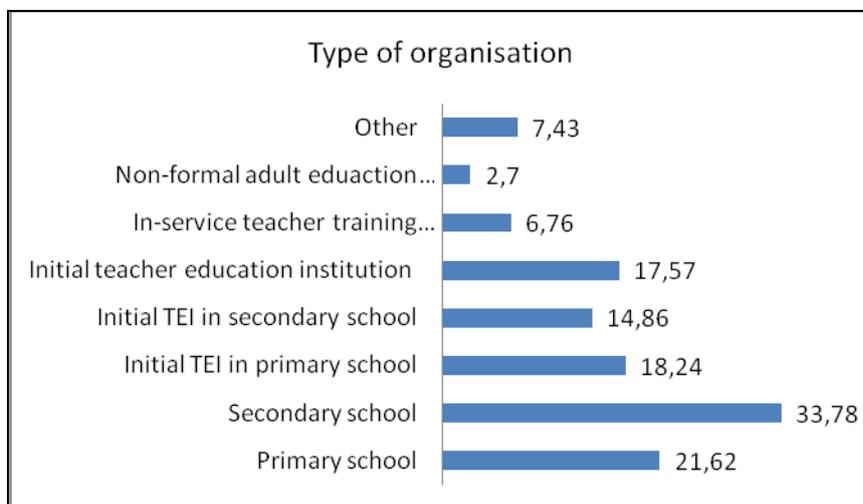
Q 13- 14: Good practices

Q 15- 17: Expectations, needs

Q 1 - 5: Personal data

From the questionnaire for teachers/trainers we received 161 answers.

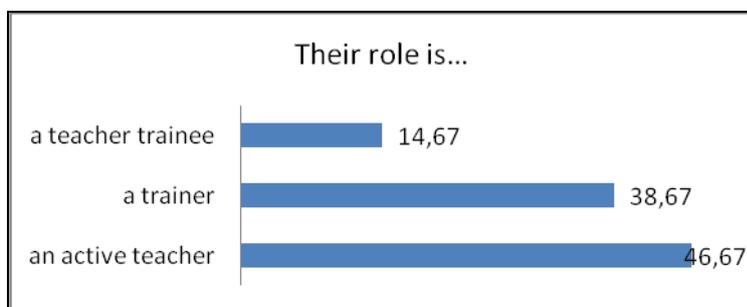
The respondents were from the following organizations:



Most of the respondents (33.78%) were connected with secondary school, followed by primary school (21.62%).

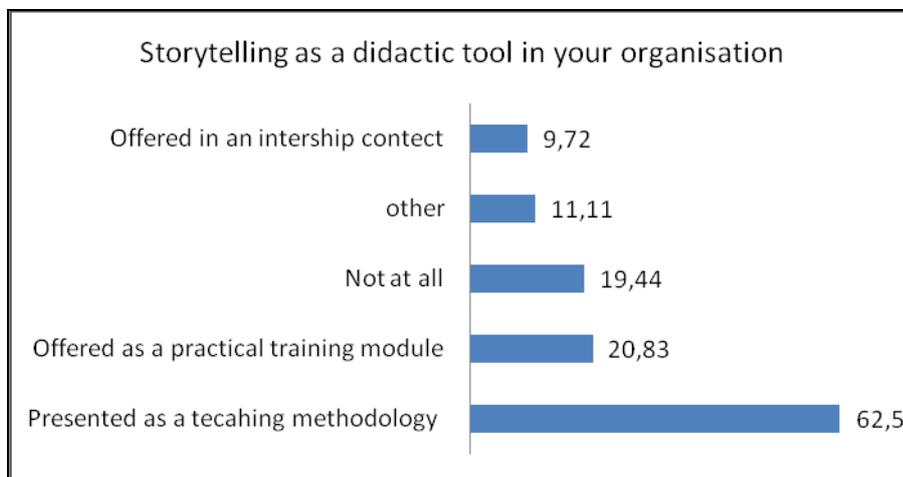
The respondents came from Belgium, Austria, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Italy, Switzerland, UK, France, Estonia and Canada.

The subjects that were represented included mostly languages, maths, science, arts, handicraft, music, physical education.



The respondents qualified themselves as active teachers (46.67%), followed by teacher trainers (38.67%) and teacher trainees (14.67%).

Q 6 - 9: Storytelling in Teacher Training



When answering the question ***“Is storytelling (as a didactic tool) part of the teacher training course in your organization?”*** 62.50% of the respondents said that it was presented as a teaching methodology (short theoretical input) and 20.83% claimed that it was offered as a practical training module (minimum 10 hours). 19.44% said that it was not used at all.

Comments were as follows:

Presented as a teaching methodology (short theoretical input)

- There are 2 sessions on the PGCE English programme. The first session is on storytelling and short stories. The second session is run by Bob Lister from Cambridge University who is a Classicist and has spent the last 10 years researching and exploring how Greek mythology can be taught as part of oral storytelling in schools across primary and KS3.
- In addition to this, we encourage students to use it in an internship context, but the students can choose to focus on other things if they want to.

Offered as a practical training module (minimum 10 hours)

- Offered in an internship context (when doing practical training in schools).
- Theoretical input and exercise (in the course world orientation, didactics) optional module "Language and Culture Awareness" (2 EC) included in International Study Program for Erasmus students practical activities: multilingual storytelling.
- Storytelling is one of the 13 language competences that teachers use, future teachers have to develop (domain 1: in interaction with pupils), so it is briefly presented as a teaching methodology (theoretical input + short practice). Students visit a storytelling festival (with professional storytellers). Some students choose storytelling as a specific competence to develop in an internship context.
- Third Year students attend a lecture for one semester in story-telling and communicative skills where they learn about the art of storytelling and get the opportunity to work on their own story telling skills.

Not at all

- I am an independent teacher and work in primary schools. I do not belong to an organisation. I am self- employed.

Other

- Used practically in a range of modules.
- A curriculum studies session was done about the uses and risks of storytelling in the history classroom.

- Short theoretical and practical input; possible focus for research project.
- A possible methodology for evaluation, sharing things, mapping the process.
- I came across it during my second placement where the primary languages teacher used storytelling to teach.

To “***Do some of the teacher trainers use stories and/or oral storytelling techniques in their training practise?***” 82.09% said yes, 17.91% said no. The result confirms that storytelling elements are actively used.

The same was asked about digital storytelling and here the results are not so good: 47.54% said “yes”, while 52.46% said “no”.

The following subjects were mentioned:

- Religious education, Mother tongue, English as a foreign language
- Economics, History, Literacy Science, Computing, Maths, Science, MFL
- General Professional Studies (GPS)

How?

- Religion expressive training communicative skills.
- Didactic Workshop English.
- It is one of the 'language tools' that teachers can use for effective teaching.
- We have a storytelling task in English and some students choose to use digital storytelling.

All 100% of the respondents answered in the affirmative to “***Should teacher training students get some sort of storytelling training?***”.

The comments stated the following keywords:

To stimulate creativity

- Cause stories create great pictures in someone’s mind, especially children. In my opinion it’s a basic method to stimulate the imagination.
- It adds a more personalised dimension to the lesson and encourages creativity.

To connect to cultural heritage

- Excellent context for language learning including cultural contextualisation.

To develop listening, reading, writing and speaking skills

- It is good for imagination, vocabulary of students and teachers.
- It is a fundamental art of speaking.
- To develop their language skills, to develop pupils' vocabulary, increase their confidence (voice, intonation, mimes, pace, look, body language etc.).

To raise pupils’ motivation for learning

- Being able to tell stories in a lively way grasps pupils' attention. When pupils are interested/are all ears they learn.
- Stories engage us, whatever age we are. They are even more engaging when told in an entertaining and captivating way through the use of voice, facial expression and body language. Activities and schemes of work become more meaningful when they are rooted in a story - the context gives a more purposeful reason for learning.

To link with other disciplines and general competences

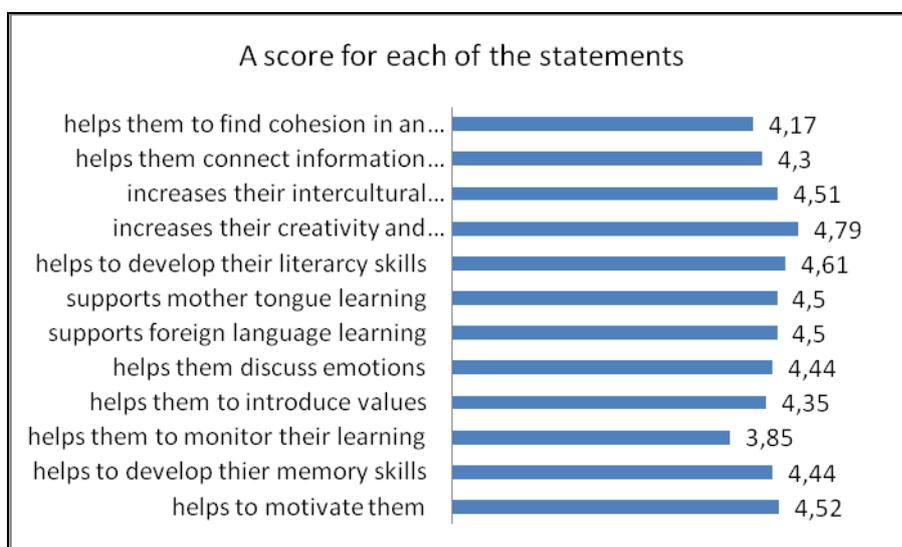
- It is a technique which is engaging for a wide variety of learners and which can be applied across the curriculum.
- Makes learning memorable, reinforces the idea of a learning 'journey'.

Other

- I only recently met a former student who now teaches at a school for Special Educational Needs who told me how helpful she finds storytelling in class and how excited the pupils are.

- The inclusive nature of storytelling engages pupils and provides a meaningful context for language learning (PFL in particular).
- Oral and written self-expression
- Listening, remembering
- Discussion
- Many different ways and possibilities for asking questions
- A story as a model
- Vocabulary
- Emotions

Q 10 -12: Storytelling in the classroom
Why use storytelling in the classroom?



Most interviewees seem convinced of the use of storytelling in the classroom. In certain fields there was some doubt (*'maybe'* or *'rather yes'*) that storytelling could influence results in a positive way but the overall picture is a very positive one because 70 to 80% of the interviewees are convinced that storytelling in the classroom:

- increases creativity and imagination
- helps to develop literacy skills
- helps to motivate
- helps to develop memory skills
- supports mother tongue learning
- supports foreign language learning
- helps to discuss emotions
- helps to introduce/discuss values

Areas in which people seem less convinced in the usefulness of storytelling in the classroom:

- helps to monitor learning.

To **“Would you like to introduce storytelling as a didactic tool in your classroom practice?”** 88.54% said yes and 11.46% said no.

“Yes”

- A story engages children and the characters in them give them someone to relate to. It makes an idea seem less abstract because it is used in a context. Children are used to reading stories and (most of them) have been since they were born so they wouldn't necessarily relate it to the academic side of schooling and see it as a more leisable

activity and one which they are more likely to remember than if presented with a list of facts.

- It is a tool with which you can access most areas and which can captivate and make children 'feel' about subjects. It puts learning into a context that can be easily understood/ identified with.
- As well as storytelling being an aid to learners for all the above reasons, it also makes my work as a teacher more enjoyable. The opportunities to be creative and to provide the children with stimulating, memorable activities are seemingly endless when they have their basis in a great story. It opens up routes to explore drama and role play, helping children to become more empathetic as they take on the roles of others.
- It helps children to understand the role of the story teller, and the fact that there is a subjectivity involved with the choice and presentation of topic/story. It helps children to analyse TV/Films/books/historians and to understand their motives and bias. It needs to be done cautiously so that children do not think there is one true story of history however.

“No”

- I'm not sure what a didactic tool is, sorry!
- The time taken to source appropriate materials when I only see students for two 50-minute lessons per week in years 7 & 8. I'm not sure how I could incorporate it into older year groups, especially as time is given in year 9 for film study.

Q 15- 17: Expectations, needs

If storytelling and storytelling techniques were to be introduced as a part of your training programme, what would you need?

What would you need in order to effectively introduce storytelling in the classroom?

Theoretical

- small history;
- theoretical input, hands-on practice at uni, feedback, practice in school;
- a thorough understanding of HOW it helps children to progress with history;
- a thorough understanding of the risks/benefits of storytelling in the class room;
- a good range of resources to use when teaching.

Methodological material

- a couple of references would be useful; some ideas about the range of ways in which it can be taught and used;
- practical and easy ways of implementing it and embedding it within a unit of work or a scheme of work;
- a framework and training for effective storytelling in the early years of learning;
- ideas, structured step-by-step phases, practice;
- basic training, particularly related to making it accessible to pupils in the target language;
- workshop-style teaching, using an approach one uses for teaching drama;
- materials to introduce the stories and to involve different types of learners (multiple intelligences and learning styles);
- digital material to support storytelling.

Good examples, training

- examples of good stories to use across a range of age and ability groups;
- good practical guidance and examples of how to introduce storytelling and teach languages through the use of storytelling to pupils in secondary school. I feel that it is easier to introduce storytelling to teach languages in primary school, but may be a little

harder with the elder students in secondary school due to the fact that they are much older and more 'mature'. The storytelling has to be relevant to each age group;

- real examples, ideas for resources, links to progress and literacy that can be sold to the rest of the department;
- meeting other colleagues interested in storytelling;
- exchanging good practises.

Story

- familiar books or simple books with a lot of repetitions, pictures, flashcards with pictures and words;
- books with relevant topics and level of language / different levels for different abilities. At the moment they do not exist.

Money and resources, technology

- puppets;
- an open space instead of a classroom full on desks, chairs, whiteboards;
- camera, microphone, laptops;
- the license for some software;
- iPads, iPhone;
- story boarding;
- to be updated and interest students, computer labs and in general extra information; technologies such as a wide screen can be useful.

Time

- We already do some work on storytelling. To do more I would need more time, better resources and I would want to be more confident myself in using digital storytelling;
- More time with the students!! The literacy aspects of the course are already really hard and it is hard to do all of the areas full justice;
- time to plan and prep;
- plenty of time to plan for storytelling, and creative colleagues to discuss ideas and activities with.

Own willingness, readiness

- you need an enthusiastic teacher who believes in the freedom of the use of the language, ready to leave the traditional way of teaching and break the ice of the comfort zone;
- if you are a good storyteller, you actually do not need attributes or anything (it can be helpful, but is not a necessary thing). You need a positive self-esteem, a positive attitude towards your audience.

Personal qualities

- body: relaxation, heating physical gesture;
- voice: heating and exploration of the voice, the rudiments of articulation and intonation, volume, the nuances, the voices of the characters, the pace, the speed;
- imagination: images and ideas to express in words, how to build a story, invention and creativity exercises;
- the confidence and dramatic gesture that oral story tellers bring with them;
- working on voice techniques (especially needed when using different voices for different personalities of the story).

2. The results of the questions for storytellers

The questions are structured according to target group next to a set of questions concerning good practice material (see below).

Q 1 – 3: Personal data

Q 4 – 6: Storytelling in Teacher Training

Q 7: Storytelling in the classroom

Q 8 – 10: Good practices

Q 1-3 Personal data

There were 71 storyteller respondents from the following countries: Ireland, Belgium, United Kingdom, Spain, Mexico, Norway, Austria, Sweden, Denmark, Australia, France, USA/Hungary, the Netherlands, Germany, Finland, Italy, Switzerland.

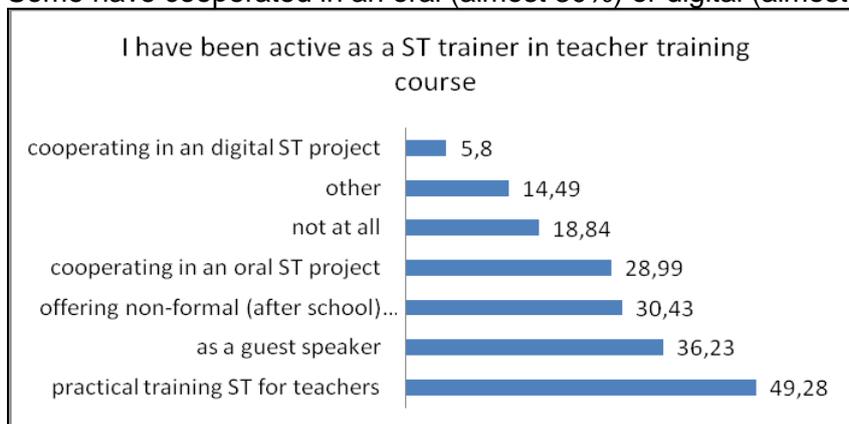
The respondents qualified themselves as follows: most storytellers are active as a performer or active in education, 50% of them as a storyteller trainer, 42 % as a trainer of storytelling techniques in different sectors.



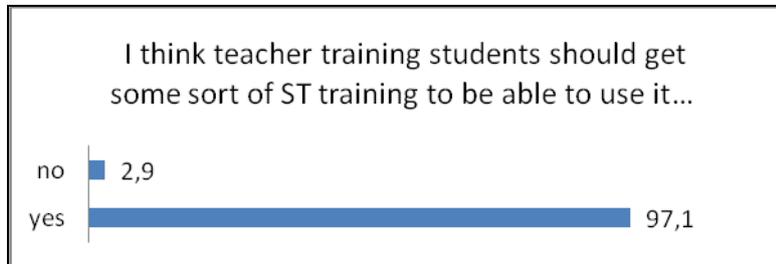
Q 4-6 Storytelling in teacher training

All interviewees are storytellers or engaged/interested in storytelling somehow. Half of them (almost 50%) have practiced a training module 'storytelling for teachers' in **teacher training** whereas some have no experience in this area at all. Some storytellers have experience in offering non-formal (outside school) training for teachers (30%).

Some have cooperated in an oral (almost 30%) or digital (almost 6%) storytelling project.



To the question '**Do you think teacher training students should get some sort of storytelling training to be able to use it in their future teaching?**' most interviewees answered 'yes' (only 3 % didn't feel the need).



97% of the interviewees are convinced that teacher training students should be offered at least an introduction into storytelling. Almost half of them have practiced a module 'storytelling for teachers' in teacher training whereas others had no experience in this area at all. This survey shows that there is a big demand to come forward with suggestions on how to tell stories (techniques, tools), criteria for good stories, good practices, and time for try-out.

The second part of this question asks for an elaborated answer provided that the answer was a 'yes'. On the question '**What would they need?**' most interviewees agreed that an insight into storytelling techniques and tools will be necessary:

- How to choose the right stories?/ where to find stories?/criteria for 'good' stories?/learn how to create stories?
- How to use stories in the classroom?/ how to incorporate storytelling into the curriculum?/how to use stories in relation to language acquisition, to geography, to history?
- The difference between oral and written stories: skills in the transfer of written stories into oral stories (→*the understanding that storytelling is not 'story-reading'*).
- (Playful) knowledge of techniques to teach children to tell their own story/how to engage pupils in becoming storytellers.
- Techniques for gaining and holding the attention of the listeners/skills in how to bring a story to life.
- Learning how to interact with the children/skills to perform and play with the audience/practice on how to connect with their listeners/how to include listeners into the process of storytelling.
- Techniques for remembering stories/ learning the bones of the story instead of memorizing it.
- Training in the tools of the storyteller (voice, gestures, eye contact, breathing etc..)
 - learn how to structure a story
 - learn to feel the rhythm and music of a story.
- Time to try out.
- Experience and practice: tell stories in small and bigger groups in schools and preschools.

In contrast with the suggestions above, there was also someone who mentioned the following: it's more a work of making them (teacher trainees) aware of their inner skills than to teach them how to tell or to tell in a specific way. Someone else also noted that it's necessary to focus on their own skills as a storyteller: without feeling confident as a teller, teachers would never use storytelling.

There was one storyteller with a clear picture in mind of how a course should run: an introductory course at the start of the teacher training program, followed by a part time course alongside throughout university to offer the possibility to specialize in storytelling. Another example: an introductory course in the beginning of the teacher training program, followed by a part time course alongside and throughout university that offers the possibility to specialize in storytelling.

What do you think professional storytellers can offer in this respect?

If storytelling and storytelling techniques were to be introduced as part of a teacher training programme, what do you think professional storytellers could offer in this respect?

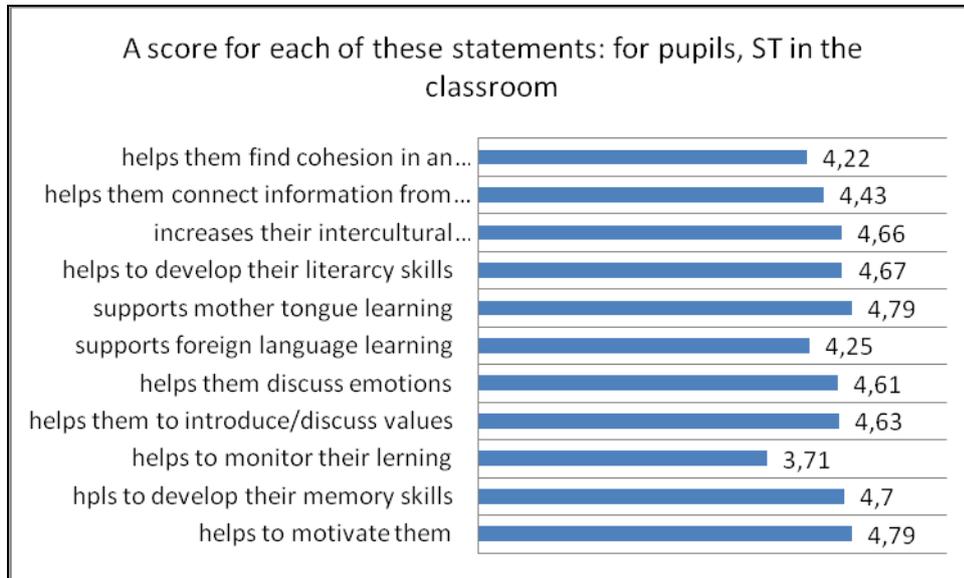
According to most interviewees, this training should offer **tools and techniques** focusing on different aspects (where to find good stories/how to use them in a class room/how to engage pupils to tell a story/ how to connect with the audience/how to memorize and structure a story). Especially the Scandinavian group emphasized experience and practice: time to try out telling stories in small and bigger groups in schools and preschools.

- Both storyteller and teacher could think how to implement storytelling and storytelling skills in the curriculum;
- storytellers can offer practical insights into using storytelling in the classroom as well as boosting the teachers' confidence and creativity;
- (both are needed in this process → storyteller: practical – teacher: didactical);
- thinking about a method that can be continued after one has ended teacher training: to become teacher-storyteller implicates lifelong learning/thinking about follow-up activities/deliver ongoing support;
- discuss ways of using stories to encourage dialogue and learning;
- share skills and techniques/training in the tools of the storyteller: voice - gestures – breathing - how to memorize and structure stories - develop a feeling for the rhythm and music of stories – choice of repertoire (corresponding to the age group) – how to use storytelling in the classroom;
- storytellers with a didactic vision/interest are needed: not all storytellers fit into a TT program;
- training in how to turn a piece of knowledge into a story/ how to create images, suspense and an atmosphere;
- show how education when channeled through storytelling can be more fun and effective to children;
- skills to find, research and adapt the appropriate tales for the curriculum;
- training in how to encourage and prepare students to do storytelling themselves;
- to offer practical, quick ways of using them in their curriculum;
- training in oral presentation techniques;
- how to connect with the audience/storytellers can work as facilitators in connecting with their imagination;
- elaboration of content by creating stories;
- give good practices in team-teaching;
- **to inspire and encourage!**

According to one of the interviewees, storytelling techniques are contradictory as it has to do more with breaking boundaries instead of establishing rules. Also **confidence-building** seems essential in this respect; therefore, training students' oral skills would give them confidence as speakers. Without feeling confident as a teller, teachers would never use storytelling in the

classroom. According to one of the interviewees, it is more a work of making them aware of their inner skills than to teach them how to tell.

Q 7 **Storytelling in the classroom** **Why use storytelling in the classroom?**



Most interviewees seem convinced of the use of storytelling in the classroom. In certain fields there was some doubt (*'maybe'* or *'rather yes'*) that storytelling could influence results in a positive way but the overall picture is a very positive one because 70 to 80% of the interviewees are convinced that storytelling in the classroom:

- helps to motivate
- helps to develop memory skills
- helps to introduce/discuss values
- helps to discuss emotions
- supports mother tongue learning
- helps to develop literacy skills
- increases creativity and imagination
- increases intercultural understanding.

Areas in which people seem less convinced that storytelling in the classroom:

- helps to monitor learning: only 21% are convinced (convinced = definitely 'yes')
- supports foreign language learning: 52% convinced
- helps to connect information from different fields: almost 51% convinced
- helps to find cohesion in an abundance of information: 46% convinced

Q 8-10

If you introduce storytelling in the classroom - which theoretical frameworks, techniques, examples do you use? Have you created materials?

Almost everyone is **willing to share** but very few have published material, written notes or notes that are *ready* to share. Most people seem to work from their own experience (in most cases this means they use techniques which they have developed themselves during their work). Workshops are often practice-oriented. Some have created lesson plans but have no

formal lesson plans ready to share. Some use a mix of theories, techniques and exercises picked up from various courses and books, mixed with their own knowledge and experience.

Conclusion

Some respondents are extremely enthusiastic about storytelling, while others are more cautious but express an interest and a desire to explore it further and are aware of the potential benefits. Our respondents show that there is a widespread interest in storytelling from trainee teachers, their trainers, and practicing teachers, but also a need for more guidance about such issues as age appropriate material, appropriate techniques and justifying the inclusion of storytelling in a crowded and assessment oriented curriculum.

How often do you use storytelling or storytelling techniques in practise?

Storytelling is often used in conjunction with other activities eg drama, songs, and props. Several descriptions show that activities are often low-tech and some respondents do not seem to rely on digital storytelling at all. 82.09% said that some of the teachers use stories and/or storytelling techniques in their training practice. The same was asked about digital storytelling and here the results are not so good: 47.54% said “yes”, while 52.46% said “no”. The result confirms that storytelling elements are actively used.

Why use storytelling?

All respondents (teachers and storytellers) indicate that they feel storytelling in the classroom can support all aspects of learning and development which were included in the questionnaire, including motivation, memory skills, values, emotions, foreign language learning, mother tongue learning, literacy skills, creativity, imagination, intercultural understanding, connecting information from different subject fields and finding cohesion in an abundance of information. The average score for each of the above was over 4 out of 5 (i.e. between ‘rather yes’ and ‘definitely yes’). The only skill to score under 4 (between ‘maybe’ and ‘rather yes’) was the question of whether storytelling in classroom helps pupils to monitor their learning.

Is storytelling (as a didactic tool) part of the teacher training course in your organization?

62.50% of the active teachers, teacher trainees and trainers noted that storytelling was presented as a teaching methodology (short theoretical input) and 20.83% claimed that it was offered as a practical training module (minimum 10 hours). 19.44% said that it was not used at all in their organization.

On the question ‘**Do you think teacher training students should get some sort of storytelling training to be able to use it in their future teaching?**’ all (100%) teachers and trainers answered ‘yes’, from storytellers only 3 % didn’t feel the need.

Would you like to introduce storytelling as a didactic tool in your classroom practice and what would you need?

88.54% of the respondents would like to introduce storytelling as a didactic tool in your classroom practice. To effectively introduce storytelling in the classroom they need methodological materials, good examples, training, money, resources and time.

All teacher trainers are convinced that future teachers should get some sort of 'storytelling training' to be able to use it in their teaching.

What are storytellers’ expectations?

What also came out in this respect is that both a storyteller and teacher are needed in this process: the storyteller should focus on the *practical* side of the training while the teacher is to

keep an eye on the *didactical* process. They need to inform storytellers about the educational framework in their country, the framework in which storytellers could work. Storytellers offer practical insights for using storytelling in the classroom and could boost the teachers' confidence and creativity. Also elaboration of content throughout creating stories and storytelling came across as one of the things storytellers could offer. As a result of going through the survey, we can conclude that there's **a need for structured materials** on the matter of storytelling in the classroom.

In conclusion, referring to most answers given, we could state that 'storytelling is a great pedagogical instrument' and storytellers should inspire teachers and encourage them in using storytelling in the classroom.

Useful websites

<http://geluidshuis.be/>

<http://es.slideshare.net/anaesbriza1/la-oruga-muy-hambrienta>

<http://andrewarticlesandstories.wordpress.com/>

www.littlebirdtales.com

<http://www.gruffalo.com/>

<http://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/Guy-Fawkes-and-bonfire-night-6061624/>

<http://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/El-nabo-gigante-storytelling-lesson-6046153/>

<http://www.policulturaportal.it/>

<http://goldsmithsmdst.wordpress.com/>

<http://www.bravetales.co.uk/>

<http://mfl-storybirds.wikispaces.com/>

<http://www.englishforeveryone.org/Topics/Writing-Practice.htm>

<http://www.crickcrackclub.com/MAIN/EDUCF.HTM>

<http://edidaktik.at/fachtaunq09/c2.html>

<http://www.donau-uni.ac.at/de/departement/imb/news/id/13093/index.php>

<http://www.storyarts.org/lessonplans/acrosscurriculum/index.htm>

B. Analysis of the curricula

1. Storytelling in Norwegian curriculum, standards, inspections and teacher training

I have examined the curricula at some of teacher educations in Norway

At RUDOLF STEINER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE of Oslo orality and storytelling is part of the training aimed at children from 6 to 12 years old. The training includes subjects like: orality, how to use a story in different subjects, symbols in folktales, what stories can be used at what age, understanding of legends, folktales and myths, storytelling exercises and dramatization and improvisation.

At teacher training at HiOA (Oslo and Akershus university college of applied sciences), we find in kindergarten teacher training a programme called: "Myths and fairy tales", it is an international study and not mandatory. The goal of the study is:

- develop their knowledge about myths, fairy tales and legends
- achieve an understanding of the content of the narratives, "factual" as well as psychological
- learn basic narrative patterns and be able to use these in own productions
- develop consciousness about the own cultural heritage
- work creatively with music, art, drama etc.
- create different story based performances
- experience and understand stories in a practical didactic context
- write an individual paper on a chosen subject within the main subject of the course

In elementary school teacher training, one can choose a study called "Norwegian 2" where the work requirement is to tell a story orally. But it is not mandatory.

In the school itself you find the use of storytelling or work on folktales at different levels in the subject Norwegian and foreign language from 6 years to 15 years.

2. Storytelling in Belgian curriculum, standards, inspections and teacher training

1. Curriculum

The Ministry of Education edited objectives that apply to all schoolnets: catholic schools, state schools, provincial schools, municipal schools. In these objectives, the only reference to storytelling is found in the curriculum of **preprimary education**:

- the children can understand a story that was told to them and that is appropriate for their age group. (listening)
- The children can formulate the content of a story in such a way that the content is recognizable. (speaking)
- Children can enter into persons and things from their environment and represent them. (drama)
- With a creative use of voice and language children can react expressively and enact experiences. (drama)

In the curriculum of **primary education**, there is no specific reference to storytelling. There are some indirect references:

In the final attainment levels of Dutch:

While developing their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, pleasure in listening, speaking, reading and writing is an attitude that has to be developed.

The children have to orientate on aspects of the listening, speaking, reading and writing task, aim, text type, listener, reader. They have to adapt their manner of listening, speaking, reading and writing to the goal, to the listener or reader. They have to remain focused in order to reach their goal and evaluate the result of their listening, speaking, reading and writing goal.

The curriculum focuses on efficient communication and reflection on the communication model: sender, receiver, message, goal.

The pupils have to show a cultural and intercultural orientation. This means that they explore linguistic cultural utterances in their environment and give meaning to them. It also means that they explore the diversity in the linguistic cultural heritage and learn to appreciate it.

In the final attainment levels of Drama and Physical Expression:

The pupils can:

- enjoy a varied offer of cultural activities appropriate for their age group;
- understand that a balance between word and movement can intensify the expression;
- listen concentratedly to a spoken text (told or read) and reproduce it orally, written, dramatically or plastic;
- develop an appropriate and pleasant speaking technique (articulation, breathing technique, tempo, pitch);
- enjoy, discuss and criticise their own and others' performances;
- enjoy non-verbal communication and movement;
- build a simple motion story based on what they heard, saw, read, felt or experienced;
- discuss critically their own and others' preparation, rehearsal, performance;

- use simple audiovisual tools creatively;
- use their own audiovisual language;
- watch and listen to art without prejudice;
- enjoy being creative and enlarge their expressive skills;
- trust their own expressive possibilities and dare show their creative utterances

In the final attainment levels of World Orientation:

The pupils can:

- illustrate that different social and cultural groups have different values and standards;
- see that racism is often based on unfamiliarity with and fear of what is foreign;
- show interest in the past, present and future, here and elsewhere.

In the final attainment levels of ICT:

- the pupils have a positive attitude to ICT and are willing to use ICT to support their learning;
- the pupils can use ICT to express their ideas creatively and to present information to others.

In the publication 'Basic competencies for Nursery-, Primary- and Secondary school teachers', there is a direct reference to storytelling: in the basic competencies of primary school teachers, job component 1 'The teacher as guide in learning and development processes' it says:

'The teacher can tell and read stories in an expressive manner and adjust this flexibly.'

In the cross-curricular final attainment levels for **secondary education**, storytelling is not mentioned as such, but there are references to aspects of it:

- Creativity: the pupils develop and perform original ideas.
- Communicative skill: the pupils practice important elements of communicative action.
- Empathy: the pupils take account of the situation, ideas and emotions of others.
- Aesthetic skill: the pupils are able to experience and create beauty.
- Open and constructive attitude: the pupils take account of developments in themselves, in others, in society and in the world.
- Self-image: the pupils gain insight in their own strengths and weaknesses. They develop an own identity as authentic individual, belonging to different groups.
- Sociorelational development: the pupils discuss the dynamics in their preference for certain cultural and artistic utterances. They use cultural and artistic utterances to understand the social world. They search for constructive solutions of conflicts.
- Sociocultural society: the pupils:
 - o handle differences between people and opinions in a constructive way;
 - o learn lessons from historical and actual examples of intolerance, racism and xenophobia;
 - o deal actively with culture and art surrounding them.
- Mental health:
 - o the pupils are able to deal adequately with happiness, sadness, fear, anger, loss and grief;
 - o the pupils use images, music, movement, drama or media to express themselves;
 - o the pupils recognize the impact of culture and art on their own and others'

emotions and behaviour.

In the publication 'Basic competencies for Nursery-, Primary- and Secondary school teachers', there is a direct reference to storytelling: in the basic competencies of secondary school teachers, job component 1 'The teacher as guide in learning and development processes' it says:

'The teacher can tell and read stories, and in doing so is aware of his or her own abilities to make optimal use of these skills and to compensate any potential limitations.'

Teacher training

The Dutch Language Union developed a reference frame for the language competences of teachers in Belgium and The Netherlands. One of the thirteen objectives in this document is devoted to storytelling:

" Teachers are storytellers, whether they teach pupils in higher secondary or preschoolers who have only just entered the school. Teachers tell about their own experiences, or take children into a fantasy world. Fairy tales, sagas, myths and biblical stories are told. Teachers tell stories in order to present learning content, e.g. history. Who doesn't know the history of Hogo de Groot, who fitted into a bookcase? Teachers also tell without presenting learning content, just for the children's amusement, or because they are so full of an event that they want to 'tell their story'. Most pupils enjoy listening when their teacher tells a story. Storytelling contributes to the language development of pupils, to their cognitive development in a broad sense, but also to their social and moral development. By means of stories and by interacting around these stories, values and standards are formed, and pupils develop in many ways.

The teacher analyses which situation is suitable for storytelling. While telling, he adapts his story to the language level and fits in with the pupils' environment. While he's telling his story, he sees how he gets across and he adjusts his story. Thus he creates a fascinating interaction with his public.

The teacher can tell different sorts of texts (stories, experiences ...) in different ways (informing, persuading, activating, amusing).

More specifically:

- The teacher can analyse whether the situation is suitable for storytelling. The teacher can assess the usefulness of a text for his pupils and for reaching his goal. The teacher can assess his own qualities as storyteller.
- The teacher can tell expressively, adapted to the situation, the goal and the level and the pupils' environment. Telling expressively means: mastering the subject/content and bringing the content expressively with adequate verbal (voice, fluently, structured, rich language ...) and non-verbal support (mimicry, movement, use of objects ...)
- The teacher can adapt the story flexibly, responding to the reactions of the pupils and the situation."

One of the job specifications of the Flemish government decree on the teacher career profile (5-10-2007) is 'the teacher as innovator – the teacher as researcher'.

This means that the teacher can:

- acquaint him or herself with educational research results;
- introduce innovative elements by questioning his or her own school culture and training concepts in a constructive manner, and by reflecting on new social developments and educational research results;

- innovate his or her own classroom practice on the basis of in-service training, and his or her own experience and creativity;
- question and adjust his or her own functioning.

2. Needs analysis of Belgian teachers

Nine teachers responded to the storytelling questionnaire: eight teacher trainers in Initial Teacher Education Institutions (primary and secondary education) and one active teacher in a primary school.

Storytelling is part of the teacher training course in these teacher training institutions: from visiting a storytelling festival and using storytelling cubes to choosing storytelling as a specific competence to develop in an internship context or offering a seven day long practical training module. In one teacher training college, it is used as a methodology for evaluation, sharing things, mapping the process.

Some of the teacher trainers use stories and oral storytelling techniques in their training practice: in a didactic workshop for language learning, to train communicative skills, in drama and religion classes. Most teacher trainers are not familiar with digital storytelling. In one teacher training college, the students make a digital story as a reflection about a coaching traject media literacy & talents.

All the teacher trainers think that teacher training students should get some sort of storytelling training to be able to use it in their future teaching. Their arguments are:

- It is one of the language tools that teachers can use for effective teaching.
- A creative way of teaching creates a bigger involvement.
- It provides an extra aspect in teaching English.
- Being able to tell stories in a lively way grasps the pupils' attention. When pupils are interested they learn new subject matter without realising it.
- Telling stories enforces the storyteller to carefully think about the words and sentences that he chooses in order to tell his story.
- It creates an authentic and useful context for learning.

Most teachers would like to introduce storytelling as a didactic tool in their classroom practice. In order to introduce storytelling in their programme, the teacher trainers would need:

- more time and more lessons to practice storytelling techniques;
- a good seminar, tips and tricks;
- relevant stories;
- good practices;
- authentic cases + practice to create a context for students.

The teacher trainers use some theoretical frameworks, techniques and example:

- 'Dertien doelen in een dozijn. Een referentiekader voor taalcompetenties van

leraren in Nederland en Vlaanderen' (Doelstelling 7) This is a reference frame for the language competences of teachers in Belgium and The Netherlands.

- OVUR-strategy: oriënteren (orient), voorbereiden (prepare), uitvoeren (do/act) and reflecteren (reflect)
- Body language, voice, materials, pictures, kamishibai ...
- Youtube film about digital storytelling

The teacher in primary education uses stories within themes of handbooks, magazines ... The techniques he uses are the ones he learned in his training as a teacher (he took specific courses on storytelling). He often makes up stories himself to use in class. Sometimes children are asked to interact in the stories he tells.

The teachers would appreciate a training that includes:

- a coherent framework combined with some good/bad practices;
- exchange of experiences;
- enough time to try out some techniques in front of an audience (other trainees);
- voice (especially needed when using different voices for different personalities of the story), mimic art, breathing, self-confidence.

In conclusion: storytelling as such gets very little attention in the guidelines for primary and secondary education, but there are some indirect references to it. It gets more attention in preprimary education and in teacher training. Teachers would like to introduce storytelling as a didactic tool in their practice and are interested in theoretical framework and in training.

Glossary

Preprimary school: ages 2,5 to 6

Primary school: ages 6 to 12

Secondary school: ages 12 to 18

References:

- *Ontwikkelingsdoelen, eindtermen(basisonderwijs), vakoverschrijdende eindtermen en ontwikkelingsdoelen (secundair onderwijs) van het Ministerie van Onderwijs*
<http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/curriculum/basisonderwijs/>
- *Basic competencies for Nursery-, Primary- and Secondary school teachers.* Annex to the 5 October 2007 Flemish government decree on the basic competencies of teachers.(Published in the Belgian Official Gazette on 17 January 2008, pp 1594-1631)
http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/curriculum/lerarenopleiding/documenten/BC_0.1.pdf
- *Teacher career profile.* Annex to the 5 October 2007 Flemish government decree on the basic competencies of teachers.(Published in the Belgian Official Gazette on 29 November 2007, pp 59246-59250)
http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/curriculum/lerarenopleiding/documenten/TCP_0.1.pdf
- Paus, H., Rymenans, R., Van Gorp,K.,(2006). *13 doelen in een dozijn, een referentiekader voor leraren in Nederland en Vlaanderen.* Nederlandse Taalunie,. Den Haag
<http://taalunieversum.org/sites/tuv/files/downloads/dertiendoelen.pdf>
- TALEs project (2014) *TALES survey storytellers*
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/TALESsurvey>

3. State of the art – Storytelling in England’s curriculum, standards, inspections and teacher training

1. Curriculum

The National Curriculum for state schools in England was comprehensively revised (and reduced in size) in 2013.

Overall, it is more concise and more traditional (for example the return of learning by rote and an expectation that pupils will learn the general historical narrative of England). There is less mention of creativity across subjects; creative writing & ‘storytelling’ are often broken down to learning & use of techniques eg “Pupils should be taught to write sentences by sequencing sentences to form short narratives” in *Key Stage 1 (KS1)*¹ *Year 1 writing – composition*.

However there is one significantly strong reference to creativity & stories in the new curriculum’s overview of *English – Reading*: “Reading also feeds pupils’ imagination and opens up a treasure-house of wonder and joy for curious young minds” (*National Curriculum Framework 2013*, p15).

The English curriculum is the main subject to refer to stories, poems, narrative, or creativity (approximately 23 mentions); followed by Languages (3 mentions); and History (2 mentions). Subjects such as Art & design, and Design & technology, make reference to creative thinking but this is not likely to be in the form of storytelling or narrative. Interestingly, Science does still refer to creative thinking at KS1 and KS2: “Pupils should have plenty of opportunities to learn the names of the main body parts (including head, neck, arms, elbows, legs, knees, face, ears, eyes, hair, mouth, teeth) through games, actions, songs and rhymes” (p161) & “Pupils might work scientifically by: comparing the uses of everyday materials in and around the school with materials found in other places (at home, the journey to school, on visits, and in stories, rhymes and songs)” (p165); furthermore pupils are encouraged to learn about the history of important scientists which could very easily lend itself to stories and tales: “Pupils might find out about people who have developed useful new materials, for example John Dunlop, Charles Macintosh or John McAdam.” (p165). These references appear only for KS1; and significantly appear only in the ‘guidelines’ i.e. non-statutory notes. Further references to creative thinking survive but not in the context of stories, e.g. Year 3 “suggesting creative uses for different magnets” (p172). The previous curriculum’s insistence on the inherent creativity of science is therefore diluted but survives in some form.

Interestingly, there are different approaches to stories, storytelling and narrative between English and Languages. The Languages approach is less prescriptive and technical, and more open to ideas of exploration, discovery, imagination and enjoyment. For instance (in *Languages: Subject Content: KS2*): “**appreciate** stories, songs, poems and rhymes in the language” (p228); and “read literary texts in the language [such as stories, songs, poems and letters], to **stimulate ideas**, develop **creative expression** and **expand understanding** of the

¹ For a description of the “Key Stages” (KS) used in English schools see Glossary

language and culture” (p230); and “**write creatively to express their own ideas and opinions**” (p231) (Our highlights).

Much of the prescription for English is much more focused on technical aspects: “becoming very **familiar** with **key** stories, fairy stories and traditional tales, **retelling them** and **considering their particular characteristics**” or (in the KS1 English notes & guidance): “By listening frequently to stories, poems and non-fiction that they cannot yet read for themselves, pupils begin to **understand how written language can be structured in order**, for example, to build surprise in narratives or to present facts in non-fiction”.

While KS1 pupils are required to “[learn] to **appreciate** rhymes and poems” this is also coupled with “and to **recite some by heart**” which could of course involve creative storytelling techniques but could also be interpreted as rote learning.

At KS2 it is required that “Pupils should be taught to develop pleasure in reading”.

It therefore seems that the use of stories and narrative in the teaching of English is expected to develop pupil’s enjoyment and discovery, but also to ensure they learn their literacy skills, sometimes in quite technical ways. On the other hand, stories and creativity in the other subjects are used mainly for enjoyment or discovery of experiences and concepts rather than being technical.

This could be a result of the pressure to ensure pupils perform well in school tests, where English literacy (alongside math) is of paramount importance. This is reflected in the amount of guidance provided in the curriculum document: 70 pages of curriculum guidance for English; 52 pages for Math; 44 for Science; and between 2 and 7 pages for each of the other subjects.

Reliance on stories, poems, creative writing and creative thinking is overwhelmingly found in the KS1 and KS2 curricula. There are 36 mentions in specific subjects’ curricula; 30 of these are in KS1 and KS2. The remaining 6 are for KS3, with only three specific to stories/creative writing & expression (one for KS3 English and one for KS3 languages; the other mention is KS3 English listing types of narrative texts pupils should read, but this is for personal reading and not storytelling or creative expression). There are no mentions for KS4.

Many schools in England, of course, have until very recently based their practice on the previous version of the National Curriculum.

The previous document for primary (KS1 and KS2) seemed somewhat less traditional than the new National Curriculum with a noticeable emphasis on creativity across all subjects.

In the old curriculum, creativity was valued in the general principles of the curriculum and highlighted in several subjects which are not classically considered as such (science, geography, physical education) with science in particular singled out for its creativity: “It stretches the imagination and creativity of young people.” (*National Curriculum Handbook for primary teachers in England 1999*, p77) – though this did not extend to explicit mentions of storytelling in the science curriculum.

The language used in the requirements for English shows how the new National Curriculum is much stricter in demanding pupils know about literacy techniques. The previous curriculum

appeared to be less detailed in the specific skills required for instance stating pupils at KS2 should “use their knowledge of sequence and story language when they are retelling stories” but without going into more specifics at this level. (p47)

In the previous curriculum, stories were integral to guidance for History, with specific mention of “fictional stories” (p104) as a way of representing the past, at KS1. It is also interesting that the inherently creative Art & Design had almost no reference to stories or storytelling even though at KS2 the link was explicitly made with “using visual and tactile elements and materials and processes to communicate what they see, feel and think.” (p120). Music was identified as ‘creative’ and there were references to performance, but no reference to narrative/story at all.

In the previous curriculum, primary Languages were not a statutory subject and as such were clearly mainly seen as a reinforcer of other core subjects (p144). The main reference to storytelling as a truly creative enterprise was in the context of “international or multi-cultural work, for example celebration of festivals, storytelling” (p144).

In some ways, many of the same hallmarks are to be found in the old National Curriculum with regard to storytelling and creative expression. In both documents, references to stories, storytelling and creative expression are mainly found in KS1 – already dwindling by KS2 – and mainly in English & languages. The 2014 *TALES survey* responses from secondary school colleagues show the challenges teachers feel they face when considering using storytelling techniques with older children (for example, Respondent 133). This idea that storytelling is mainly appropriate for the youngest children is clearly reflected in the National Curriculum (both old and new).

Note: It is important to remember that the National Curriculum only applies to state funded ‘maintained schools’ in England; state funded ‘academies’ and ‘free schools’, and independent (private) schools, are not obliged to follow curriculum guidance. These types of school are increasing in number (a majority of secondary schools are academies).

2. Teaching standard & inspections

The official *Teachers’ Standards* provide scant guidance with regard to storytelling and creative expression, with just two mentions – that teachers should “Take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy” and “Promote a love of learning and children’s intellectual curiosity” (both p11).

Ofsted’s *Framework for school inspection* does not provide specific references, but does mention “the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school” (P5) which is often the doorway to many of the storytelling and creative activities that we have recorded.

There is no mention of storytelling in Ofsted’s guidance for the use of target language (in Languages).

Ofsted's *School Inspection Handbook* (guidance for school inspectors) does not provide specific reference to storytelling but nevertheless highlights areas where storytelling can be expected to have a role. Naturally, inspectors will concentrate on literacy skills ("inspectors will give particular attention to the teaching of literacy (including reading)"p13) and the document also stipulates that "Inspectors should hear children read from books that are appropriate to their age, including from previously unseen books". There is once again a reference to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development: "inspectors must also consider the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school." Among the criteria for evaluating this, inspectors are asked to seek the following types of evidence :

- that pupils take part in a range of activities requiring social skills, including volunteering
- develop an appreciation of theatre, music, art and literature

respond positively to a range of artistic, sporting and other cultural opportunities

It is therefore clear that while guidelines and inspections look for skills and practice which can be supported by storytelling, storytelling itself (and associated creative activities) is referred to only obliquely.

3. Teacher training

Some initial teacher training institutions in England report using storytelling techniques in their training and feel it is very successful.

Goldsmiths University of London's primary languages teacher training course has a 'story box' project at its heart which is a significant theme throughout the curriculum studies training. It forms the basis of the final assessment of the course. Students are required to carry out extensive theoretical reading and work collaboratively to create an effective story box project, alongside an essay "designed to engage the student in a critical study of a cross curricular area." The approach shows how storytelling can support, very effectively, all aspects of good primary teaching practice including developing language skills (Session 1), phonics and oracy development (Session 4), literacy development (Session 5), methodology and second language acquisition theories (Session 7), amongst others.

The success of the Goldsmiths approach was recognised by Ofsted (the state inspectorate) in 2012, highlighting its "high quality of training for modern languages". Once more, storytelling is strongly associated with creativity: Ofsted praised the Goldsmiths languages training programme for its "creativity and innovation: helping student-teachers to be imaginative and take risks in their teaching".

The University of Cumbria report an approach with some parallels to that of Goldsmiths, "to develop pupils' intercultural understanding when choosing foreign stories, to find strategies to convey meaning, to develop pupils' participation, curiosity, to increase vocabulary." Again, the importance of storytelling is clear to the respondent: "It works really well!" (Respondent 154 – Teacher trainer in Languages).

Respondents from University of Reading underlined the importance of storytelling “almost as a life skill” and focused on the human, interactive side of storytelling: “I’m very keen for the students to learn to tell stories without having a book in their hand as I believe the book can be a barrier. Telling a story allows the storyteller to have better eye contact with their audience and draw them in.” (Respondent 93 – Teacher trainer in English).

Storytelling is mainly prevalent in primary training; secondary practice appears more challenging.

A trainee teacher reports that the biggest challenge with older pupils is the teacher’s confidence: “I think the confidence to go for it, I am happy to read stories but to actually tell them and bring them to life is more difficult for anyone who is training.” (Respondent 152 – Trainee teacher in English). Another respondent (Respondent 133 – Practicing secondary teacher in Languages) tells us how time pressure is an issue for older pupils: “The time taken to source appropriate materials when I only see students for two 50 minute lessons per week in years 7 & 8. I’m not sure how I could incorporate it into older year groups, especially as time is given in year 9 for film study.”

Nevertheless, an encouraging comment from a trainee teacher for secondary at Canterbury Christ Church University reports that one of her university assignments is on the role of the fairy tale, and is convinced of the usefulness of storytelling in secondary practice: “Certain texts on our National Curriculum may not be naturally stimulating to young people, they may come with certain expectations or connotations. Being a story-teller allows these presumptions/preconceptions to be removed”. (Respondent 80 – Trainee teacher, Secondary English)

Canterbury Christ Church University’s teacher training department has received one of the strongest inspection reports from Ofsted in the country; suggesting perhaps that an intelligent and strong use of storytelling techniques at secondary level – in both training and practice – is associated with excellence.

In conclusion:

- Creativity, creative thinking and stories are present in both the old and new versions of the National Curriculum
- Concepts such as creativity, imagination, enjoyment and discovery tend to be broken down to technical skills to be acquired and subsequently assessed (and evidence sought for them by inspectors). This is especially so in the new curriculum; and particularly in English.
 - Storytelling and creative expression are mainly confined to guidelines for early years of primary school (KS1), decreasing by KS2 and virtually absent from secondary guidelines.
 - Storytelling and related creative activities appear mainly in a narrow range of subjects (English; Modern Languages; History) and are almost absent from guidelines for other subjects including ‘creative’ subjects such as music, art and ICT.

- There is little or no guidance on storytelling from the Teaching Standards or the inspectorate.
- Despite this there is a lot of interest from teachers and trainers.

Glossary

Key Stage 1 (KS1): Primary school Years 1 and 2. Ages 5 to 7.

Key Stage 2 (KS2): Primary school Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. Ages 7 to 11.

Key Stage 3 (KS3): Secondary school Years 7, 8 and 9. Ages 11 to 14.

Key Stage 4 (KS4): Secondary school Years 10 and 11. Ages 14 to 16.

Ofsted: "Office for Standards in Education" = school inspectorate

4. Storytelling in the Estonian curriculum and teacher training

1. Curriculum

In the curriculum of National Curriculum of Basic School and Upper Secondary School, there is no specific reference to storytelling.

The objective of the school is to support the development of the following area competences, including **Communicative competence** – the ability, via language, to understand, preserve, communicate, exchange, interpret and create texts. The widest meaning of communicative competence is the capacity to communicate in different situations and on different themes in oral and written form. In creating the competence, the following subjects are important: the Estonian (Russian) language, literature, foreign languages, all subjects with their terminology and texts.

In language lessons (mother tongue and foreign language) the students;

- can understand a story that was told to them and that is appropriate for their age group. (listening)
- can formulate the content of a story in such a way that the content is recognizable. (speaking)
- with a creative use of voice and language children can react expressively and enact experiences. (drama)
- creativity and creative thinking.

2. Initial teacher training and in-service training

There is no mention of storytelling study programmes and curricula. Some initial teacher training institutions in report use storytelling techniques in didactics programs.

Storytelling courses have been regularly organised since 1991 at the **Estonian Folk Culture Centre**. <http://www.rahvakultuur.ee/?s=108>

This is a national organization under the Ministry of Culture.

Its mission is to support the survival and evolution of Estonian folk culture and to participate in the process of developing and carrying out the cultural policy.

The main responsibilities of the Folk Culture Centre are:

1. Participation in the process of development and operation of the cultural policy on regional, national and international level;
2. Contribution to the survival and evolution of the folk culture;
3. Appreciation of intangible heritage;
4. Carrying out professional training courses for adults in the area of folk culture.

At the core of the Folk Culture Centre are its personnel, split into the following divisions: Development and Education department, Intangible Heritage department, Folk Culture Department and Administration.

Folk Culture Centre includes storytelling. Stories about Estonian people, family tradition, folk calendar, fairy tales, personal experiences, stories about songs, customs, dances and so on.

Since 2012 they had different stories about project "COME SHARE THE STORY". Not only great methods about storytelling but also story about atypical, original and very talented people who are tied with that project.

The most extensive of storytelling courses is the School of Fairy tales. The purpose of the storytelling courses and seminars is to entice adults back to storytelling. Kindergarten teachers, schoolteachers, librarians, etc. all indeed often use fairy tales in their everyday work, but the share of other tradition is receding. It is necessary that consciousness be raised concerning the meaning of family tradition, stories connected with one's hometown and people, etc. Even the repertoire of fairy tales often tends to be restricted to familiar and known classics. They have attempted to demonstrate the different possibilities for approaching fairy tales and have offered methods for domesticating even the most alien of tales.

In addition to teaching, the School of Fairy tales is also involved with the general advancement of the storytelling movement in Estonia. They have told stories at folklore events, community centres, museums, kindergartens and schools - to both children and adults. They have transcribed texts from the collections of the Estonian Folklore Archives and attempted to take them back to the same places from where they were once gathered. Frequent and close co-operation has developed with folk musicians, the purpose of which is not just a concert experience in which stories are told between music and singing. Their desire at such gatherings is to encourage the listeners to notice, listen and tell stories, if not at that same moment and in that same room, then at home, among friends, etc.

An example of storytelling methods in Estonian Folk Tradition School:

Interactive performance of fairy tales with puppets felted by needle.

Performance of fairy tales is a story which includes four Estonian the most popular fairy tale. Stories are older than 150 years and therein they have many incomprehensible words which are not know children and adults. Participants are sitting on the ground in the circle. There are two storytellers, telling and playing stories with needle felted puppets and participants must listen very carefully and be very active which includes doing different activities together with storyteller. When there are unknown word we use that word several times – for example we have nowadays the word praegu (=now) but before it was in South-Estonia prõlla. The storytellers are telling what does it mean, all the participants can tell it with us, tehy are playing that word or activities with our hands, voices and by felted puppets. Everybody can be involved the play, touch puppets and also sing a runo song.

It is like a very creative language learning. In Estonia we use that Storytelling method to children and families and also on adults and it is great!

5. State-of the art of storytelling in in-service teacher training curricula at PHSt (one of the largest teacher training institutions in Austria)

Pre-primary school teachers are not educated in our institution

In the curriculum for **primary school teachers** there is no explicit mentioning of storytelling. Only the curriculum for didactics for teaching English in primary schools mentions “*work with texts adequate for children, stories and children’s books..*” continuously in all 6 semesters (“work with stories, sketches and dialogues.. in semester 6).

Storytelling is NOT explicitly mentioned, though drama techniques are.

In the optional subjects there is drama pedagogy, but no storytelling.

Secondary I teachers

No mentioning of either “stories” or “storytelling” in neither the basic common studies nor the subject-oriented curricula, nor the subject didactics of German language or English.

However, in an optional course which is drama pedagogy (H6-3s) it is mentioned that “students find creative solutions for stories and fairy tales”

NEW

However, new curricula for primary and secondary schools are just being finalized and I contacted all the people responsible during the process: down from the rectorate – vice rector – coordinator for primary school curriculum – coordinators secondary school curriculum. Everybody thinks storytelling is nice and necessary, but apparently there is no room for explicitly mentioning it anywhere also in the **new curricula**.

There is going to be a focus on “Aesthetics” and I am told there is a possibility there in project work in which students can choose their own approach (drama, music, handicraft, or STORYTELLING). I guess it will take me some more work.

(Christa Bauer)

6. Storytelling in Italy

This document analyzes the role of storytelling in teacher training in Italy. There are multiple paths to become teachers. We focus on a comprehensive analysis of degree programs for preschool and primary school teachers, because they offer the most detailed course descriptions. A less detailed, non-exhaustive analysis of other training paths is also offered.

1. Teachers' training: objectives

An analysis was conducted on of the courses of study in all 23 universities in Italy (public and private) that offer a degree in Sciences of Primary Education: a 5-years program that provides graduates with the necessary credentials to teach in preschools and primary schools.

Words like “storytelling”, “fairy tale”, “myth”, “legend” and similar are never explicitly mentioned in the programs' descriptions of objectives, contents and methods. However, all programs include among the mandatory “characterizing activities”:

- a course in “**Italian literature**: texts and problems of Italian literature from its origins to the present day, in the framework of European literature.” The course requires 13 CFU’s.
- a course in “**Childhood literature**: texts and paths in childhood literature.” The course requires 9 CFU*.
- 10 of the 23 courses of study detail the goals of literature studies as follows (with slight variations):

“Literature education for future teachers in primary schools and preschools aims at:

- creating a **reading habit**, as a means of **continuous development of the person**;
- providing **skills to interpret the literary message, identifying also thoughts and emotions**;
- offering tools to identify the **aesthetic qualities and values of a text**, in order to select excerpts or literary works that can be proposed to children, in order to educate their taste;
- **understanding the narrative thought and its structures**;
- being able to **analyze and comment a text**;
- knowing the **Italian literature tradition** and its **forms of transmission**.”
- The University of Torino also mentions the following objective:
- knowing the **educational potential** of works of literature, intended **as a model of true dialogue with the other**, based on hermeneutical respect;

The University of Torino and the University of Palermo summarize some objectives in this way:

- learning and interpreting, analyzing and commenting works of literature, **especially poetic works**;
- Interestingly, the Free University of Bolzano at Bressanone (located in an autonomous region with 5 officially recognized languages) includes specific objectives for different languages:
- “knowing how to analyze and comment a text, understanding its narrative language and interpreting its **literary, moral and emotional message**;”
- for the Romansh/Ladin language: “Knowing the **prosodic structures of exposition, argumentation and narration**, particularly in relation to childhood literature;”

* Each CFU (University Formative Credit) corresponds to 25 hours of work, be it attendance to classes, personal study or participation in laboratories and other instructional activities. The degree in Sciences of Primary Education requires a total of 300 CFUs, corresponding to a Bachelor’s degree followed by a Master’s degree.

- for the English language: “in-depth knowledge of the **prosodic structures of exposition and narration**”, and “knowledge of registers and literary genres relevant for childhood (childhood literature, linguistic games and **rhymes**).”

No course description explicitly mentions digital storytelling. However, all except two universities also list among the objectives the ability to “select and use in each occasion the tools that are most suitable to the planned teaching path (frontal lesson, discussion, simulation, cooperation, mutual aid, group work, **new technologies**)”.

The University of the Aosta Valley (another autonomous region) does not include this objective. However, it states that students must “acquire digital skills described in the recommendations of the European Parliament and Council on December 18, 2006 and the ability to apply them in the classroom. Specifically, said skills pertain to the **ability of using multimedia languages for the representation and communication of knowledge**, for the use of digital content and, more in general, of simulation environments and virtual laboratories.”

2. In-depth look: a course in “Childhood Literature”

The description of the course in “Childhood literature” offered at the University of Bologna states that students completing the course will have acquired a set of knowledge and skills, including a detailed knowledge of cultural paths in childhood literature and its intersection with pedagogic theories, as well as:

- “mastering interpretive tools that look at the complexity of **languages in childhood literature**”;
- “knowing the main **theoretical contributions on narration** and being able to translate them into the educational relationship”;
- “designing narrative paths centered on relational styles typical of **the educational alliance in the moment of narration: mutual listening** of the stories, **oral narration, reading aloud, sensitive gaze**, acceptance of **languages and verbal and non-verbal expressions**, specific attention to the quality of communication in the narrative contest.”

Contents include:

- “Childhood literature and **lullabies, poems, rhymes, fairy tales, adventures**, stories, **plots, characters, landscapes**, genres, meanings, classic and contemporary authors, narrative styles and especially childhood metaphors.”
- “**The fairy tale**: a special genre. ‘Difficult themes’ in the cultural and anthropologic roots of fairytales and childhood involvement.”
- “Storytelling: formats, modes, contents. **Oral narration, reading aloud**, figures, narrative theatre, movies and animation movies...”
- “**Emotional, relational, cultural and narrative aspects** related to the educational and pedagogical outlook.”
- “**The meaning of experience that finds its representation in the ritual of storytelling**: for each child, for the relationships among children, between children and teachers, between children and adults in general.”
- “The ritual of storytelling... and the trading of roles. **The child narrator and the emotion of narrating a story/oneself**: stories, body, voice, word, gesture, objects, play.”

Teaching methods are described as follows:

- “Frontal lesson. Brainstorming, discussion and comparison. **Analysis of works of literature**, narrative, visual, filmed. Analysis of interactions among children, adults and stories.”

The following “tools to aid teaching” are listed:

- “**Reading aloud, oral storytelling**; vision of images and illustrations, of visual materials – movies, theatrical pieces...”

3. Teaching methods

At least 10 of the 23 universities describe the teaching modalities for literature education as follows:

- “integrated frontal lessons”;
- workshops and applicative laboratories;
- use of electronic tools for Linguistics (linguistic corpora, electronic dictionaries, tools for stylometric analysis, concordances) and for reading and analyzing works of literature;
- use of printed tools (historical and etymological dictionaries, methodic, analytic and usage dictionaries)
- use of specific tools for primary schools (children’s dictionaries, readability indexes, educational software);
- analysis of grammars (historical, normative, descriptive grammars);
- **reading and analysis of works of literature.”**

While storytelling (digital or otherwise) is almost never explicitly mentioned as a teaching technique in itself, the activities listed do not exclude its use. 7 universities specify that frontal lessons may be “aided also by **multimedia technology** (with software, video recordings, videos...). 12 universities mention the use of **simulations**. 8 include analysis and “production of **individual and group projects**”. 6 universities list debates and meetings with experts.

Other activities include collective discussions, group work, formative teaching practice, and more.

7 universities also propose “activities prevalently based on simulation and **dramatization**, aimed at developing and refining the use of nonverbal languages for the purposes of expression, communication and learning.”

Two universities mention **role-playing** among their instructional activities.

A more detailed look at the course description for the University of Macerata offers insights on the rationale of **storytelling techniques as a method** to help future teachers confront, analyze and understand classroom dynamics. Teaching modalities include the “analysis of real teaching experiences that will furnish significant elements to activate the analysis of teaching practice and their underlying theories, scientific and non-scientific. Mono- or multi-media products will be used (audio and video recordings of classroom lessons), as well as **narrations of teaching experiences and case studies** that may offer opportunities for the development of vicarious experiences useful to construct the first representations at work; [...] Therefore, such goal will be pursued... by:

- favouring structures of the **narrative** and reflective type, concerning both the student’s personal paths of knowledge acquisition and specific experiences (**logs, journals, teacher portfolio, documentation, summaries, conceptual maps**);
- enabling students to enter a situation virtually and for real, in order to understand and analyze its complexity (**simulations, role-playing, case-studies, analysis of video, analysis of the writings of pedagogues or teachers, classroom lessons, projects**).”

4. Other training paths

Data on storytelling in other teacher training paths is difficult to collect, since official documents rarely delve on contents and methods, focusing instead on the bureaucratic requirements for access. In addition, paths for acquiring teacher credentials are disparate and in continuous evolution.

In order to acquire credentials for teaching in secondary public schools in Italy (or in preschools and primary schools without a degree in Sciences of Primary Education), candidates must:

- have passed a national competition exam in the disciplinary area of interest (such exams are held every few years, when enough positions become available),
- or have successfully completed a selective one-year program called TFA (Tirocinio Formativo Attivo, or active formative teaching practice),
- or have accumulated at least three years of teaching (as substitutes or in private schools) and acquired the university credits required by the PAS program (Special Abilitation Paths).

4.1 Competition exams

An analysis of the knowledge and skills required to pass the Competition exam for teaching humanistic subjects (Italian, History and Civic Education, Geography, Latin, Greek) in middle and high schools mentions “linguistic education, intended as an individual’s general process of developing skills for communication, expression, learning and social interaction.

Specifically, a solid knowledge is required of the **methodologies and techniques for developing linguistic abilities, both oral and written.**” However, no methodologies are specified.

Requirements focus on textual and critical analysis, structure and language, rhetoric and metrics, knowledge of Italian and European literature, literary movements and relationships among them, cultural frameworks, authors and critics. Candidates are required to know a long list of authors (Italian, European, Latin and Greek), a few of which in special detail. For Latin and Greek, candidates must also be knowledgeable about bibliographic aids, such as dictionaries, history and metrics textbooks, lexicons and similar.

There is no explicit mention of the role of storytelling as a teaching method or educational goal, although it is certainly not excluded.

4.2 Teaching Practice Program (TFA)

TFA is a one-year teacher-training program accessible through a national entrance test, which enables candidates with degrees in Math, Literature, Physics, Chemistry, History, Foreign Languages and others to obtain teaching credentials for teaching in Secondary public schools.

A few documents detailing oral and written exams to complete the TFA program have been analyzed. No explicit mention of storytelling has been found. The exam descriptions for Philosophy, Art History, Applied Mathematics, Science for middle school (Math, Chemistry, Physics, Chemistry and Natural Sciences) make no reference whatsoever.

However, some indirect references exist. The oral test for Psychology and Education Sciences mentions among the themes of Cognitive Psychology: **“Imagination, fantasy and intelligence.”**

In the oral test for Foreign Languages and Civilizations, “the Committee will prepare an adequate number of **excerpts from actual works** and textbooks; the candidate will collocate them into the author’s production and in general within the correct historical-literary period, with reference to other authors”.

The oral exam for Literature, Latin and Greek in Slovene-speaking Classical Lyceums mentions the “evolution of Slovene history of literature in its organic development, through the **direct reading, as broad as possible, of the works that represent its most characterizing examples**”.

The same requirement is present in the oral exam for Literature, Latin and Greek in High School. The written exam is the analysis of a literature excerpt, plus the use of said excerpt in a teaching situation. The candidate must “**demonstrate exposition skills** in the appropriate linguistic format, ability to **critically elaborate contents**, knowledge of adequate methodologies to present such contents in the classroom” and “a solid knowledge of the methodologies and **techniques for the development of linguistic skills, both oral and written**”.

Therefore, while storytelling is not explicitly mentioned, future teachers must learn related skills and how to teach them.

4.3 Special Habilitation Paths (PAS)

An analysis of the Ministry of Education decree of March 25, 2013 concerning the “requirements and modalities for the initial formation of teachers in preschools, primary and secondary schools” (for the PAS program, i.e. candidates with at least 3 years of teaching experience) makes no mention of storytelling – indeed, contents and methods are hardly mentioned at all.

Conclusion

Storytelling is rarely if ever mentioned on official documents and therefore seems to lack official recognition as a legitimate and effective teaching method or educational goal. Many indirect references are nonetheless made to it or aspects of it, and teachers are not precluded from informally using it in their classroom or in teacher training. Indeed, many do, as the results of TALE’s survey suggests.

An Italian teacher commented in an answer to TALE’s survey: “*I believe that storytelling is a fantastic way of working on contents. Creating images creates a deeper connection toward what is studied.*”

7.State of art: storytelling in Portugal curriculum and teacher training.

Unfortunately the Tales questionnaires to teachers, teacher-trainees and teacher-trainers in Portugal had no answers. We believe the reasons behind this absence are in timing and language. The first consisting the present political conjuncture, meaning in the last few years the increasing of professional degradation in the public school system by the administrative instability in terms of regulation and practices, hours accumulation and carrier freeze, taxes rise, radical mobility or non-integration of subcontracted teachers, the intensification of bureaucratic structure, creating an intense social discontent and an over working charge on teachers. In fact, schools are practically frozen in terms of extracurricular activities, as we can acknowledge by our professional experience as storytellers working in that context. The second reason consisting in the fact that English was not an obligatory language for a long time in the Portuguese school system. Many teachers, from different generations, do not read or write in other language. We have conscience that it is almost impossible to teachers now to engage in any extracurricular activity or responsibility, why we assume that having the availability to answer a questionnaire in English would be difficult.

An active approach from our part to get questionnaires answered, beyond contacting schools and teacher training institutions by email and informing about it, would evidently influence the results. As professional storytellers we are connected to teachers and institutions familiar to storytelling practices, which we perceive as exceptions. Having those contacts answering the questionnaires would evidently consist in a misrepresentation of Portuguese reality.

Despite this unfortunately absenteeism, we do believe a quantitative approach and the questionnaire methodology, besides its evident limitations, would not give an image of the storytelling presence in curricula and in teacher training in Portugal different from our knowledge.

We performed still a research on the curricula of Teacher Training Schools in different Portuguese capital districts², especially on the Preschool and Primary Teachers courses, which putted in evidence what we previously thought: storytelling is absent of the curricula of future preschool and primary teachers. In the Ministry of Education list of curricula goals³ the situation is the same: it is mentioned a visual, dramatic and musical component, but storytelling is absent.

We research especially on Preschool and Primary Teacher Training because its curricula were more easily researched then vocational teaching specialized courses (Portuguese Teaching, History and Geography Teaching, Mathematic Teaching, etc.). Despite the specificity of the research and its limitations, we acknowledge by professional experience that the preschool and primary levels are traditionally the most receptive to storytelling. For years now that storytelling have being a reality in extracurricular activities in kindergartens and primary schools in Portugal, and educators and teachers from those levels have being an active

² Bragança, Braga, Porto, Aveiro, Coimbra, Guarda, Castelo Branco, Lisboa, Beja e Faro.

³ <http://www.dgidec.min-edu.pt/ensinobasico/index.php?s=directorio&pid=3>

storytelling audience and group of interest, participating in workshops and assisting events. If storytelling were not in the curricula of those courses, where it would be?

We are aware, by professional relations, that the discipline of “children literature and reading promotion” (freely translated) present in some of those curricula of Primary Teacher Training courses would integrate some storytelling techniques, as in Portugal this two worlds, literacy and storytelling, are deeply connected in school and library practices and activities.

From the professional storytellers working in Portugal only one lecture in a Teaching Training School (Escola Superior de Educação de Paula Frassinetti) in a regular basis, being the content of those lecturers not exclusively about storytelling or storytelling techniques.⁴

Concerning teacher training outside official curricula, we are aware, by professional experience, that workshops targeting especially teachers are rare. Only few storytellers are officially certificated as trainers and thus can provide credited training modules. The majority of the cases, workshops are targeting a broad group of professionals working with children, as librarians, social workers and of course teachers.

⁴ Information acquired by informal interview.

8. Storytelling “revival”

Storytelling had been always present in societies. We find references of it in texts from Ancient Mesopotamia, India, Egypt, Greece and anthropology witnessed it in every non-written culture.

In the European context our first references are found in *Gorgias*, from Plato. The philosopher also speaks about it in the *Republic*, questioning the content of the stories told to children by their nurses. Already then there was the awareness of the importance and the impact of telling stories in the education of the young citizens.

In fact, the Latin tradition created a prejudice against the *aniles fabulae* told by those nurses, which is reflected in the English expression “old wives tales”. Those stories (mostly magic folktales, legends and mythology) were seen as something too fantastic, violent, false and unworthy of attention.

On the other hand, folk stories were told and written down by priests as *exemplum* for predication. Later, the Italian *novellas* and the French *fabliaux* preserved a tradition of realistic and comic stories. In the 17th century the *fairy tale* become a fashion in aristocrat and bourgeois milieu. Not to mention the *fables* immortalised by Aesop, Phaedrus and La Fontaine, among many others.

Soon, in the Modern Era, Europeans were interested in their traditional folktales, and Romanticism saw it as the true identity of a people. Many collections of tales were made and one became internationally famous: the Grimm’s *Märchen*.

But this is only one side of the cultural tradition where those tales lived. They were also alive in an often-marginalised oral and folk tradition. During the history of Europe, from Roman Empire through Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Modern Age, there are references of the practice of telling stories in private and social life. There are also references of professional performers that would sing and recite mythological and heroic narratives, like the Norse Eddas, the medieval ballads and romances of knights.

In modern times, with the industrialisation and urbanisation, those practices became more and more absent of social and cultural life. And in the 20th century, revivalist folk movements, reacting against a mediatised society and an apparent sense of lack of community, open the way for the revival of storytelling.

But even before that, one of the major fields that embrace those practices was children education and entertainment. The educational democratisation and the process of alphabetisation (together with the creation of public libraries), alongside with the emergence of a market for children entertainment (food, games, literature...), was the territory that first made possible the professionalization of such practices.

The institutionalisation of the kindergarten, the public or religious schools (Sunday schools) and the children’s libraries departments were the first factor to lead some educators towards specialisation by creating the opportunity for the appearance of the first professional storytellers of our time.

In the first decade of the 20th century there were already former educators working as storytellers in schools and libraries in United States and England, as Sara Cone Bryant, Katherine Dunlop Cather or Marie Shedlock.

This does not mean education and children entertainment were the only context where storytelling emerged during the last century. Cultural associations and groups of interest found in storytelling a way to “revive” social engagement. Performing artists found in telling stories a renewed form of art. “Storytelling” and “storyteller” became an epithet of valuation in almost any art form: songwriters, filmmakers, novelists were labelled storytellers in the market place.

But no other context allowed the rise of a professional class of storytellers as the work for children. This is probably due to the wrong idea that storytelling and folktales are childless things but it is also because of the infinite educational applications and proficiencies of storytelling.

Performance

In Performance Studies the concept of performance can be very broad and it is used to refer to many different kind of situations: in everyday life; in sports; in business; in technology; in play; in arts; etc.

In anthropology, performance is used to refer to a cultural event of some importance, often ritualised, where some part of the group *performs* something to the other part (singing, dancing, telling a story...). They all actively participate, despite their different roles.

A performance (and its meanings) comes into being by the bodily co-presence and interaction of performers and audience. As transitory and ephemeral, it is characterised by its “eventness”. What gives to performance its specificity is that the production of what it conveys happens at the same time and space of its reception. That simultaneity is in fact the focus of that form of communication.

Storytelling performance (or Oral Storytelling)

The major problem of thinking about storytelling is its ubiquity: it is everywhere. The *homo narrans* paradigm makes storytellers of us all. In fact, we do tell stories constantly, orally or through an immense number of means: books, films, documentaries, videogames, etc. Apparently, to be in the presence of something we can call storytelling, the only thing we need is a narrator who addresses to a listener (no matter if the first and the last are present or not, as in a book).

However, storytelling performance is when the narrator and the listener meet in a cultural event recognised as such, meaning an event that breaks the continuum of everyday life and that implies special rules and behaviours.

It can be an event of high performance intensity, as a storyteller in a stage telling for an audience, or an occasion of low performance intensity, as when a parent tells a story to his child in bed, and all the situations between. But no matter the nature of the circumstance there is an agreement between teller and listener that it is “story time”, so they will more or less act accordingly.

Elements at play in oral storytelling

- Context: where and how the storytelling event takes place. The context is the most conditioning element of a storytelling performance, as it has direct consequences in all others. The stories and the way they are told depends on space, time, audience, etc...
- Message (discourse): all that is “said” during the event, not only verbally.
- Speech (text): the verbal element of the performance.
- Gestures (kinesis): the gestures and physical expressions of the performer.
- Space (proxemics): the organisation and utilisation of the space, including movements through it.
- Voice (prosody): the voice modulations, intonations, and other vocal elements.
- Story (narrative): the narrative level, meaning the story or stories told (its content and structure).
- Relation (phatos): what happens between the performer and the audience in terms of communication [phatos: do not mistake with the persuasion tool in aristotelic rhetoric]. It refers to the level of communication in which empathy is built during the performance.

Storytelling is described by many as the art of “relation”. This means that normally the major concern to performers is to establish a relation to the audience. The nature of that relation can be diverse, but the awareness of that element (by the performer and by the audience itself) is specially appreciated. It can be said that this is the most valued element of storytelling.

Oral Storytelling as an educational tool

“The benefits of oral storytelling are as diverse as the stories we chose to tell” (Munn 1999: 5).

To give an idea of the benefits of storytelling in the classroom and the competences it can improve see (on the bibliography I send):

Munn, Hilary Dawn (1999), *Oral Storytelling and Student Learning: Once Upon a Classroom*. Unpublished Thesis. University of Toronto (see chapter II).

Of the list of benefits that the author presents, we could emphasise (or disagree):

- Storytelling teaches listening.
- Improve the use of oral language and subsequently also the written.
- Improve the understanding of plot, sequencing, characterisation, and other literacy competences.
- Develop visualisation and creativity.
- Allow students to strengthen their communication and social skills.
- Enhance children´s self-esteem.
- Establish a special bond between teller and listener, improving the teacher/student relation, but also the sense of community among students.

Mundy-Taylor, Julie (2013), *Storytelling Engagement in the Classroom: Observable Behavioral Cues of Children´s Story Experiences*. Unpublished Thesis. University of Newcastle (see chapters 2.4. to 2.7).

A list of benefits taken from the author:

Storytelling improves listening skills and increases attention spans;

- it requires active listening and is an activity that brings an immediate reward for the listener and the storyteller;
- it improves literacy skills;
- it strengthens comprehension;
- it improves vocabulary, imagination, and logic skills;

- it builds critical thinking skills as listeners compare different versions of tales or the responses of numerous characters to similar situations;
- It improves empathy with others and, others cultures, enabling children to resist better to peer pressure and make independent decisions;
- it improves group dynamics, social skills and reasoning;
- it is a relaxing activity where the children are not evaluated and where the only thing required is a willingness to listen;
- It is a living context for making meaning.

For the teacher, the author calls attention to the following benefits:

Helping making connection.

Enhancing the love of reading and of stories.

Uniting “difficult classes”.

Cognitive benefits.

No matter the stories told, if we summarise the ideas of the two authors previously referenced to, it is possible to recognise pedagogical, personal and social benefits of the storytelling practice in the classroom. From one side, it helps to create a motivating learning environment and develops important skills. It also contributes to the students’ personal and cultural self-awareness, being a way for them to express themselves and their ideas. Finally, it helps to raise individuals skilled with critical thinking and confidence, but also understanding of the difference, communicative and respectful.