



Teaching Through Storytelling

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“Little Pig, Little Pig, let me in.

Not by the hair of my chinny, chin, chin!

I will huff you, I will puff you, and I will blow
your house down”

If you read the above lines with right tone and pace, it is fascinating to see different emotions going through toddlers’ eyes and the intensity is clearly reflected by their facial expressions. The odds of not listening is decreased; from a teaching perspective, one would say, and kids are immensely engaged!

Humans, by nature, love stories. The five basic elements in a story are the characters, the setting, the plot, the conflict, and the resolution. The key is blending all elements together for the story to run smoothly. Teaching through storytelling is one of the engaging tools that can be effectively used in small or large classes. Several studies have shown that the concept explained in the form of stories can easily be retained and students can be more fully engaged, as compared to a traditional lecture. The “story” does not mean, one need to tell a fairy tale in class. This can be a real-world example, scenario behind a specific discovery, or an event that can explain the objective of class. It is essential to understand the student and the day to implement any student-engaging tool. For example, if students are less engaged and showing less enthusiasm, more active learning strategies may be employed rather than storytelling. Hence, the timing of telling the story can vary. One can use an effective lecture opening, lecture break or as concluding part to make the students to think.

Five components of effective lectures are: begin with a question, understand the significance, ask students to make a judgment, answer the question, and identify where we go from here. These five components if tied together can make a good story. However, in order to implement the

story in a lecture, clarity of delivery, variability in tone, enthusiasm, on-task behavior, and opportunities for the students to apply are critical. Various tools such as short video, pretending to be or being dressed up as a specific person, case-study, or loudly reading a book can complement storytelling.

Instructors should be very flexible and creative in their teaching approach. It is critical to apply the correct engaging tool at the right time. If you make more purpose for each lecture, you will provide more value for the students to listen and learn. The stories can create lasting memories and help students to think and imagine.

References

Five components of effective lectures. https://reason.kzoo.edu/tlc/assets/Pedagogy_5ComponentsEffectiveLectures.pdf

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