Storytelling is an academic leveler. Utilized in an ESL classroom, it makes language learning enjoyable, safe, and fun, encouraging students to take verbal and written risks and learn English more quickly as a result.

This workshop will present three different ways storytelling principles can be used to create lesson plans that will reach even our most at-risks students. All of these lessons coincide with NJTESOL Standards, NJCCC Standards, and NJ Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders. No storytelling experience is necessary!

I. Story "Talk"
   A. This process will be modeled by the presenter. It involves reading and "telling" a story at the same time, thereby engaging students more fully in the action of the story and in connecting it with their own prior knowledge and interests.
   B. After participants listen to the example, we will have a group brainstorming session to identify ways that audience members could utilize this technique in their own classrooms.
   C. After participants share, the presenter will address some of the ways she has utilized this technique.
      These include:
      1. Identifying narrative story elements such as setting, character, plot, climax, and story arc
      2. Providing interesting examples of language arts concepts such as cause and effect, sequencing, comparing and contrasting, identification of character traits, etc.
      3. To encourage oral language self-confidence, this "story-process" can also provide a springboard for students to retell the story in their own words, dramatize it in a small group, or conduct character interviews (a process in which students are chosen to become one of the characters and other students ask them questions about their choices and motivation).
      4. As a way to link these stories with character education issues, students can use these stories to discuss creative problem solving and moral choices.
      5. Many creative writing exercises can be offered as a follow-up to "story-talk". These could include writing exercises about "what happens next", writing about an aspect of the story students would like to know more about, or writing about an incident in their own lives when they had to make a hard choice or to do something similar to the action in the story.
      6. Other creative writing exercises can be started by utilizing a visually beautiful drawing from a children's folk tale to prompt students to create their own story.
7. Using "story-talk" to reach older students can be very effective; especially if you introduce it by saying you would like their help in choosing an appropriate story for younger children. The "story-talk" process can also be utilized with older students to serve as a model for writing projects in which they can write and illustrate their own children's books—and then have the opportunity to read their own work to younger children.

D. Presenter will show examples of writing projects created by ESL students utilizing the "story-talk" technique.

II. Story Circles
A. Presenter will introduce this technique and explain its origin. "Story circles" are as old as cave paintings and involve human beings sharing their experiences based on a single theme such as "the scariest thing that ever happened to you". We know, as ESL teachers, how rare it is for our students to get an opportunity to talk in a classroom setting. This activity not only allows them to speak, but it builds community while doing so. It is also an excellent choice for a Friday or an "after-test" activity!
B. Participants and presenter will model this activity together.

III. Monster-making or "How to Create an Original Legend"
A. The presenter will explain and model the steps of this "myth-making" process that grew out of her life-long fascination with mythology and folklore. This process can be adapted for intermediate and advanced ESL students from K-12 and the steps are illustrated on a separate hand-out. Copies of articles written by the presenter when she was an Artist in Residence in the Pacific Northwest are also available.
B. Participants will be asked to create a "monster" based on an important social problem facing our world today.

IV. Questions & Answers, Wrap-up, and Evaluation

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