

Interactive Storytelling in the Library

Melanie A. Ramirez¹

ABSTRACT

This paper aimed to investigate the effectiveness of using interactive storytelling technique in the library. Interactive Storytelling is to give both beginning and experienced storytellers—especially those who work in a library and also adults who work with children in Head Start programs, day care centers, museums and other recreational places where children gather—a sense of the role of storytelling in human history; an understanding of the importance of story in a child's life; basic information about how to choose, prepare and tell stories; program planning guidance; and ways to gain administrative and community support for interactive storytelling as an important part of library service to children. Professional librarians know the SKILLS ON STORYTELLING (Interactive): What makes a Story Tellable?; What kinds of stories are needed in a storyteller's Repertoire?; Basic steps in Learning a Story; Telling the Story; and Qualities of a GOOD Storyteller. Librarians can be story-teller that can encourage parents to read and tell stories to their young children every day with interactive; they can teach older children and teenagers how to tell stories interactive in the library; and they can also conduct storytelling workshops for day-care staff and other adults who work with children. Interactive Storytelling is an excellent means of introducing children to the wonderful world of books while building positive attitudes for reading. The exposure to oral language patterns helps developing children's listening sub-skills. This study has also conducted techniques on interactive storytelling to children in the library setting.

Keywords : Interactive Storytelling. Storyteller. Reading. Librarian. Children. Book

1. Introduction

What Is Interactive Storytelling?

- is the art of using language, vocalization, and/or physical movement and gesture to reveal the elements and images of a story to a specific live audience.

- has been called the oldest and the newest of the arts. Storytelling is a sharing experience. When we tell, we show our willingness to be vulnerable, to expose our deepest feelings, our values.

¹Librarian III, National Library of the Philippines, T.M. Kalaw Street, Ermita Manila, Philippines, melanier_25@yahoo.com

- Interactive Storytelling provides the opportunity to interpret for the child life forces which are beyond his immediate experience, and so to prepare him for life itself. Interactive Storytelling encourages the art of

listening. Listening to stories introduce children to patterns of language and extends vocabulary.

- Interactive Storytelling is a way of keeping alive the cultural heritage of a people.



Fig. 1. Storyteller

Library storytelling grew out of a desire to introduce children to the pleasure of literature to excite children about books and reading. In the late 19th century, Children Librarianship was developed and stories were used as a way to keep young people's attention. Storytelling has always been used as way to pass down folklore and history before it was written down in books. Today both books and digital media continue this tradition, but a live person telling a story still provides an experience that's unlike anything else.

Interactive Storytelling brings a library's collection alive. It's a fantastic way to make information or data meaningful. Think about how companies use storytelling to sell their services and products or how a speaker tells a story to capture his or her audience's attention. The body language and tone of voice of a storyteller brings so much more to the story,

and is a great tool for communication. Storytelling also teaches good listening skills.

TECHNIQUES ON INTERACTIVE STORY-TELLING

• Preparation

Interactive Storytelling requires training and experience. However, anyone who is willing to take the time to find the right story and learn it well, and who has a sincere desire to share enjoyment of the story, can be a successful storyteller.

In preparation the storyteller should consider the following:

1. Audience – level of the children. Gender. Background of the audience. Helping the audience to understand;

5-7 years old --Repetitive stories

8-10 years old -- Thinking stories

11-13 years old -- Emotional stories

2. Venue – checking the place where can you perform. Controlling the environment; Sound system (Microphone : wireless or lapel)



Fig. 2. Audience



Fig. 3. Venue

- **Selection**

Out of a rich reading background to select the story that exactly fits the day or the hour or the mood... that is to be a happy and successful storyteller.

The Storyteller reads constantly in search of new material. Rereading is important, too, because a story that may not appeal to the storyteller at first reading may appeal at another time.

1. Story – clearly defined; a well developed plot; characterization; style; faithfulness to source material; dramatic appeal; and appropriateness for the listener.

2. Context – the gist of the story to be tell. Provide a song, drawing or question and answer.

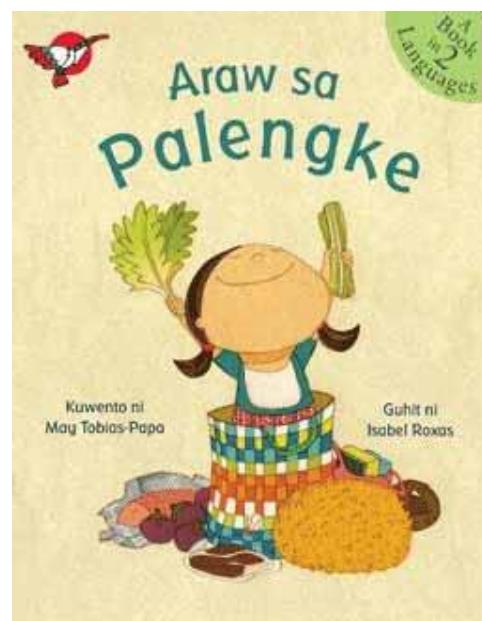


Fig. 4. Story

“A day in a market”

I’m coming with Nanay! We’re going to the market. What would we see there? Who would I meet? Come, join us! Today is market day!

A storyteller must be flexible, as it is often necessary to change program at the last minute. Allow time each day over a period of at least two to three weeks to make a new story your own. Live with your story until the characters and the setting become as real to you as people and places you know.

Read the story from beginning to end several times. Read it for pleasure first. Then read it over with concentration. Analyze the story to determine where the appeal lies, what

the art form is, what word pictures you want your listeners to see, what mood you wish to create.

Practice telling the story aloud-to yourself, your pet, your family and friends, to any-one who will listen! Any hesitation reveals weak aras in your knowledge of the story. Practice! Practice! Practice!

DOS AND DON'TS IN CONTEXT

1. Don't show the book;
2. Acknowledge all answer;
3. It must be less than 1 minute;
4. Ask easy questions;
5. Don't give the summary; and
6. Memorize the title, author's and illustrator's name.

• Presentation

Before beginning, call up the essentials emotions of the story as you first felt them. Breathe deeply and begin. No matter what the opening words of the sto-ry are, the tone should be intimate.

Look directly at your listeners. As you tell, let your gaze move from one to another so that each child feels involved in the telling of the story. Break direct eye contact only to look at an imaginary scene or object you want your lis-teners to see, or when you engage in dialogue between two or more characters during the telling.

Speak in a pleasant, low-pitched voice with enough volume to be heard easily by listeners in the last row. Speak clearly, distinctly, smoothly, and at a pace suitable for the story.

Gestures, if used at all, should be natural to the teller and to the action of the story. If gestures draw attention to themselves they are wrong. Use your hands naturally. Don't jam them in your pockets. Don't stand with arms crossed in a hostile posture. The storyteller establishes the mood of the story hour. Physical appearance, a pleasant expression, a smile, personal warmth, pleasure in the sto-ry all give a sense of enjoyment. (Fig.5)



Fig. 5

A story hour can be held anywhere. Lack of a separate room is no excuse for not having a storytelling program. What is needed is a setting that is infor-mal and an atmosphere that is relaxed and intimate. A semicircle of listeners facing the storyteller seems to be the most effective arrangement.

Tone of voice should relate to what is going on in the story. The storyteller develops sensitivity to words.

How you use your breath is important. Place your voice somewhere near the middle of the chest rather than in the head or upper chest. Breathing from the upper cheast or head will give you a lighter, weaker tone; breathing form the abdomen will give you rich, full tones,

connoting strength and vigor. Here are directions for the Complete Breath :

1. Sit in a cross-legged posture. Slowly exhale through the nose.
2. Slowly inhale through the nose.
3. Continue the slow, quiet inhalation.
4. Continue the slow, quiet inhalation.



5. Hold breath with shoulders raised for a count of five.

6. Slowly and quietly exhale deeply, relaxing shoulders and chest as you ex-hale and contract abdomen.

7. When exhalation is complete, repeat.



Fig. 6

To overcome lazy habits of articulation, It is necessary to exercise the speech organs in much the same way that we exercise for muscular coordination in athletics or instrumental music.

TONGUE EXERCISE

1. Stick out tongue and touch nose; point tongue.
2. Stick out tongue and touch chin; point tongue.
3. Rotate tongue— encircle lips first to right, then to left.
4. Repeat.



LIP EXERCISE

1. Pout, relax; pout, relax.
2. Spread lips and say E (long E).
3. Round lips and say OO.

JAW EXERCISE

1. Move jaw from side to side.
2. Move jaw up and down.
3. Rotate jaw first to left, then to right, then open and close mouth slowly.

MOVEMENT WARM-UPS FOR STORYTELLER as LIBRARIAN

Here are the few gentle, natural exercises suited to a storyteller's/librarian's pre-performance needs. These exercises are designed to be done standing without messing up your clothing. All the exercises are meant to make you feel good.

1. Yawn Stretch

Standing up, yawn and stretch with as many parts of your body as you can (your back, neck, legs, arms, etc.) Open your mouth wide as you yawn. Think of stretching luxuriously on a lazy morning in bed. Do this several times.

2. Alignment

Stand with your feet parallel to one another, your weight balance between your toes and heels, your feet directly under your pelvis; not wider, not narrower than your own body width.

3. Breath

Still standing aligned, take at least two full breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. Close your eyes. Relax on each exhale. Breathe from your diaphragm. This means that the breath movement takes place in the ab-domén, not the chest.

4. Neck

Chin Down: on your next exhale. Neck swings: leaving chin close to chest, move in gentle neck swings from right to left. Over shoulder: slowly lift head back to upright and look over your right shoulder. Side to side: in a smooth slow manner, switch from looking over your left shoulder.

5. Back Stretch

Clasp hand behind your back and raise your arms as high as you can. Clasp hands over your head.

6. Side Stretch

Reach right arm over your head toward the left.

7. Shake-Out

Start by shaking your arms in a loose and jiggle manner.

8. Toe Press Walk

Standing aligned, roll onto the ball of your right foot, bending your right knee slightly.

Remember that your posture and body movement are physically connected to your breathe and voice. Your body posture and movements affect people interpretation of what you are saying. Body posture and movement affect your own self image and your mental attitude. Body, mind and spirit tell the story. Prepare your whole self for storytelling.

What are the QUALITIES of a GOOD STORYTELLER as LIBRARIAN?

The early storytellers had qualities that are just as important today. Creative thinking; Loud, Clear Voice; Relaxed, Flexible Face and Body; Confident "THICK FACE" and "I CAN DO IT" attitude.

Storytelling Approach (THE READ FIRST, THEN SPEAK (RFTS). (Fig. 7)

1. Phrase the lines;
2. Practice picking up the words in a phrase without opening your mouth;

3. Look up to the audience. Then tell audience what you have just read; and
4. Go back to the book and pick up the next line.



Fig. 7.

To become an accomplished storyteller librarian you need to experiment with different methods of learning and with different styles of telling. There is no one right way to tell a story. It holds, therefore, that storytelling is an individual art, and that each storyteller will bring a special kind of appreciation, imagination, and interpretation to the telling. All creative artists share the same qualities — enthusiasm, spontaneity, imagination, perception, insight. A good storyteller as librarian is also vital human being who finds joy in living and who can reach the heart and mind of a child.

References

Baker, Augusta. (1987). *Storytelling : art and technique*. 2nd ed. New York: R.R. Bowker Company.

Greene, Ellin. (2010). *Storytelling: art and technique*. 4th ed. California: Libraries Unlimited.

