The Art and Science of Storytelling

LEADING IN LITERACY AND NUMERACY FOR FIRST NATIONS, METIS, AND INUIT STUDENTS: EMPOWERING THE SPIRIT FORUM

MAY 16& MAY 17, 2012

JACQUELINE OTTMANN

In the beginning...

"In the beginning, there was only orality. Literacy then arrived and secured its place in our history, a firm place" (Van Woeerkum, 2007, p. 183).

Stories develop identity & self esteem

Toulouse (2010) comments:

"A growing body of research demonstrates that Aboriginal students' self-esteem is a key factor in their school success (e.g., Hilberg & Tharp, 2002; Kanu, 2002; Swanson, 2003). An educational environment that honours the culture, language and worldview of the Aboriginal student is critical to this process. The curriculum and pedagogy of schools needs to meaningfully represent and include Aboriginal people's contributions, innovations and inventions. Aboriginal students require schools in all aspects to honour 'who they are' and 'where they have come from' (e.g., Antone, 2003; Gamlin, 2003; van der Wey, 2001). Aboriginal self-esteem is described as the balanced and positive interconnection between the physical, emotional/mental, intellectual and spiritual realms." (p. 1)

The Science of Story

Benefits of Storytelling. Storytelling is a powerful tool for teaching reading and writing (Honeyghan, 2000; Strickland & Morrow, 1989). A growing body of literature emphasizes the value of storytelling as a means of helping children understand classroom discourse and sense of story (Greene, 1996; Peck, 1989; Trousdale, 1990; Williams, 1991). Oral stories help children acquire the context of literacy. Children become keenly aware of the unspoken meaning of the story's words by observing shifts in the storyteller's body posture, tension, and tone of voice. (Craig, Hull, Haggart, Crowder, 2001)

The Science of Story

Students with Language Problems and Learning Disabilities. Many studies suggest that children with language problems and learning disabilities have difficulty interpreting classroom discourse rules. Those that involve responding to narrative inference questions and those that require cause-and-effect relationships are particularly difficult (Crais & Chapman, 1987; Merritt & Culatta, 1998; Merritt & Liles, 1987).

(Craig, Hull, Haggart, Crowder, 2001)

The Science of Story

Classroom discourse refers to the rules that govern turn taking, intent, and communication behaviors in the classroom setting. Teachers structure school stories around these discourse rules. Because stories are "one of the fundamental means of making meaning pervading all aspects of learning" (Wells, 1986, p. 194), teachers need to be able to recognize differences in story structure and help their students master the "**decontextualized narratives of school**" (Merritt & Culatta, 1998, p. 280).

A shift to … from…

"Writing is decontextualized and speaking contextualized" (p. 187)

"According to Hunter, 'writing is contextualized as speaking but in a different manner. **The audience is never absent**' … 'writers formulate mental representations of the particular readers, purposes, topics and other features that constitute their immediate communicative contexts' (Rubin, 1988, p. 3)" (p. 187)

Stories as interventions?

Shared storybook intervention has received increased attention as a strategy to promote the development of oral language and emergent literacy skills in young children (Ezell & Justice, 2005). Storybooks provide a stable source of linguistic forms and content that can be targeted as a part of speech and language intervention and, when shared, present opportunities for adult--child interaction to promote various pragmatic functions. This approach begins with the adult taking the lead in storytelling. Through various methods such as open-ended questioning, repetition, modeling, expanding, and cloze techniques, the adult facilitates the child taking an increasingly more active role in storytelling. When responding to adult prompts and in retelling the story, the child practices language targets. Opportunities for further practice of these targets are provided in a variety of situations to promote generalization" (Inglebret, Jones, Pavel, 2008)

Storybook intervention

Broadly, the communication goals involved providing (a) comprehensible language input, (b) ongoing opportunities for the use of language in social interactions, and (c) opportunities for the use of language in situations that replicated school discourse patterns.

Provision of comprehensible language input aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the zone of proximal development. **The adult determines a child's current language status and then provides input that is just slightly beyond.** In a high-context learning situation, the adult focuses on providing input that allows for [acquisition] of new concepts and language structures into those that already exist in the child's repertoire.

Addressing the literacy needs of diverse learners

- It is incumbent on all educators, particularly special educators, to recognize a child's cultural approach to learning as just that, as opposed to identifying that cultural approach as a language disability.

   Cultural Matters. Different families and cultures emphasize different styles. These can range from "watching and listening" in many Native American cultures (Rhodes, 1989) to assertively stirring up family interest with exaggerated stories that earn one the right to speak, a strategy frequently found in African-American families (Kamhi et al., 1996). Children learn discourse rules at home. A family's discourse style defines its vision of the world, and gives children the template for understanding the world around them (Cheng, 1989).
(Craig, Hull, Haggart, Crowder, 2001)

How to respectfully reflect [FNMI WNCP] ways of knowing, intellectual property rights and holistic learning environments

The best practices presented in the Literature Review (2010) have included the First Nations, Métis and Inuit community, Elders and cultural experts in planning, development and implementation and thereby supporting a shared decision making process that is responsive to the holistic learning perspective or worldview of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people. Discussions about protocol and intellectual cultural property cultural rights and holistic learning environments at the beginning of a collaborative project or initiative are critical. These discussions may lead to agreements that establish boundaries and agreements for how information is shared and used.

(A Professional Development Resource for Teachers K-12: A Literature Review, 2010)

Why should teachers recognize WNCP differences by addressing protocols?

… in taking the time to show and model respect, teachers may be given access to information that is exclusive to the people of a community. It is important to acknowledge that stories, songs and knowledge and owned by individuals, families, and Elders. Reciprocity is another important principle practiced by First Nations, Métis and Inuit people in the protocol process. Addressing First Nations Métis Inuit/Western Northern Canadian Protocol can also evolve toward genuine relationships and partnership – contributing to First Nations, Métis and Inuit student success. (p. 29)

(A Professional Development Resource for Teachers K-12: A Literature Review, 2010)

How should teachers address protocol?

"Collaborative conversations between school leaders, teachers, First Nations Métis and Inuit parents and the community regarding intellectual property rights and the various unique protocols should occur throughout the school year, and from these 'conversations' guidelines and policy can be developed and implemented"

(A Professional Development Resource for Teachers K-12: A Literature Review, 2010)

The Art of Storytelling

Sarah Kay "If I should I have a daughter"

http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/sarah_kay_if_i_should_have_a_daughter.html

Shane Koyczan, "This is my Voice," Words Aloud 2007, Canada

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHczVzGfyqQ