

STORYTELLING AS A TEACHING TOOL WITH KINDERGARTENERS

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Kindergartener's age is the age of games. Except games, the perception of a fairy tale becomes an activity at this age. But the perception of a fairy tale by a kindergartener differs from that by an adult in that way that it is an all-out activity, which needs external prompts. The Russian scientist O.V. Zaporozhets (1948) called it assistance, when a child supports book characters and tries to solve problems in the book.

O.V. Zaporozhets (1948) described the attempt to organize a group for drama with kindergarteners. One part of the children was to be the actors and the other was to be the audience; but till the end of the performance there was not a borderline between the actors and the audience. The major part of the audience went onto the stage and took an active part in the performance.

Thus, storytelling tends to be a production of a mutual story. It is a cooperation of a speaker and listeners, who help and work together in order to create a mutual product. It tends to be an interactive theatre where the plot, characters are well-known, but where the remarks are born spontaneously.

In our case storytelling is viewed as a teaching tool for the language development of second-language learners. A. Wright (1998) gives reasons why stories should play a central role in teaching a foreign language to children:

- 1) motivation;
- 2) meaning;
- 3) fluency in listening and speaking;
- 4) language awareness;
- 5) stimulus for speaking;
- 6) communication;
- 7) general development of abilities.

One of the most important steps in storytelling is the selection of a story that will be shared aloud. Not every book can be used to tell a story. The selected story should have a definite beginning, middle, and end. A kindergartener needs a folktale. A folktale is a piece of folk art, a concentration of folk wisdom. A folktale underwent changes. Million of people

excluded unimportant details from it and included essential ones into it. Characters of folktales are typical. They are characterized with two-three basic features that are easy for kindergarteners to understand.

Young children love stories with repetition and pleasing word sounds. A traditional storytelling technique presupposes “call and response”: a storyteller says a line and listeners repeat. Kindergarteners can be engaged into storytelling and respond through movement, mime or with a single word. Even if children respond, making insignificant mistakes, the storyteller should not break the process of storytelling, accuracy will come with more repetition. But if children struggle to respond and do not know how to do it in a foreign language, a storyteller should help. And in this case it is sensible to use the mother tongue to involve children into storytelling.

Kindergarteners should be prepared for storytelling in advance in order to get enjoyment from this mutual activity. For this a storyteller needs to preteach children words and phrases which they are to repeat. Language learning should bring meaning and enjoyment. That is why a storyteller should prepare motivating support, for example, pictures, puppets, costumes, etc.

Whether stories are told with props, costumes, puppets, or flannel boards or whether a storyteller stands alone at the front of the room, stories can stimulate children to listen and to speak a foreign language. Most important, listening to and telling stories helps children connect with and understand themselves and other people, a valuable asset in an increasingly complex and diverse world.

References

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