

Lesley University Graduate School

INTRODUCTION TO STORYTELLING

Course No. GARED

Dates: July 11-13, Aug. 1-3, 2003

Credits: 3

Location: Vancouver, WA

Time: Fri. 5:00-10:00,

Sat. & Sun. 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

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Their story, yours and mine --- it's what we all carry with us on this trip we take, and we owe it to each other to respect our stories and learn from them.

William Carlos Williams

Assignment for First Day Of Class:

- 1) Choose a traditional folktale (legend, myth, tall tale, fable, fairy tale, etc.) that you will develop for a storytelling performance. Find a story that entices you. It should be about ten minutes in length. The story can be one that you heard orally or one that you choose from a book. Make a xerox copy to hand in the first day of class. (If you don't have a text, write a summary.)
 - 2) Make a list four or five other stories that are meaningful to you.
 - 3) We will tell improvisational stories from our own lives and family history. Think of several anecdotal stories from your own life and experience that you might like to share.
 - 4) Begin reading the texts to prepare for class discussions.
- (See cover letter for more detail.)

Course Overview:

We will combine theory and practice as we explore the art of storytelling as a dynamic process. We will develop practical techniques for adapting stories in the classroom and in designing an integrated creative-arts curriculum. We will also ask a number of questions as we define the role of storytelling in our lives. How do stories shape our sense of culture and place? What is the role of storytelling as a traditional folk art and as a contemporary performance art? How do stories function both personally and collectively? What are some of the social, political, and artistic issues of storytelling? What is the relationship between orality and literacy, the spoken and written word, and why does that matter in our classrooms? How do shifts in communications technology change the way stories are shared and the types of stories that are told? Why, in our media and computer dominated culture, is it as important as ever to develop the skills and aptitudes that storytelling generates? What is the relationship between storytelling, memory, and imagination? Through group discussion, readings, special projects, written work, personal explication, and dramatic interaction, we will uncover the intuitive wisdom that stories share, and how stories evoke responses from our diverse populations of students.

As storytellers, we will do a number of activities to find our individual style and voice. Each participant will select and develop a folktale for performance. We will also learn to adapt and tell of a number of shorter stories in the classroom. Through our work, we will develop awareness of the interactive nature of storytelling, shifting between storyteller and listener, and developing collective and improvisational pieces. We will review a variety of techniques for developing family history, traditional stories, story fragments, and personal myth. Story-drama

activities will involve techniques for working with mapping, movement, characterization, dialogue, vocal quality, and inflection.

As teachers, passing the richness of storytelling on to our students, we will develop various techniques, resources, bibliographies and curriculum activities for the classroom. These will include workshops on family history and oral history interviews, telling traditional folktales, developing story fragments, and memory enhancing techniques. We will also learn how to unlock the important messages and teachings that stories have to share. Through our work, we will learn how to research and define various folktale types, and how to adapt them to particular subject areas. We will also be introduced to various curricula that utilize current state and national standards in arts education in storytelling and the performance arts.

To enhance our awareness of the importance of storytelling in traditional cultures, we will explore various storytelling traditions from around the world and throughout history.

Life will go on as long as there is someone to sing, to dance, to tell stories and to listen.

Oren Lyons

Course Objectives:

Course Participants Will. . .

- Develop their imaginative and rejuvenative power as storytellers
- Develop multiple ways to pass stories on to their students.
- Tell personal and family stories.
- Develop and tell a traditional folktale for performance, (legend, myth, tall tale, fable, fairy tale, etc.)
- Gain experience developing a number of short stories by participating in a variety of improvisational storytelling games and activities that develop plot, characterization, inflection, and other performance techniques.
- Work individually and in groups on storytelling activities, curriculum resources, and bibliographies that can be used in the classroom or other educational settings.
- Gain awareness of narrative/ cultural styles of storytellers.
- Develop a philosophy of the importance and role of storytelling in traditional and contemporary cultural and educational settings.
- Gain experience writing an explication of a traditional story, and looking for the symbolic messages that stories have to share.
- Develop a storytelling journal.
- Develop dialogue and techniques for scripting the inflections of oral language.
- Review resources on storytelling, and become aware of materials for developing storytelling across the curriculum in creative arts education.
- Learn memory enhancing techniques.
- Explore a variety of curriculum resources and bibliographies that adapt storytelling into the classroom.
- Be exposed to current issues and curriculum activities that tie the art form of storytelling into the evolving state and national standards in arts education.
- Explore the theoretical artistic, cultural, historic, and social role of orality, literacy, and technology. We will learn how stories are shaped in different mediums: as they are told orally, through writing, and through various technological mediums such as computers, film, and radio.

Good stories fire the listener's imagination. They draw people in and include them in the storytelling process.

Edward O. Welles

Texts:

1) Collins, Rives, and Pamela Cooper. *The Power of Story, Teaching Through Storytelling*. Gorsuch Scarisbrick, Scottsdale, Arizona, 1997. (ISBN 0-13-776709-9)

2) The National Storytelling Association, *Tales As Tools: The Power of Story in the Classroom*. The National Storytelling Press, Jonesborough, TN, 1994. (ISBN 1-879991-15-2)

3) Helm-Meade, Erica. *The Moon in the Well: Wisdom Tales to Transform Your Life, Family, and Community*, Open Court Publishing Company, Chicago, 2001.

Recommended Texts:

The following book will be useful for anyone who works with older students, adult learners, or in arts or administrative positions outside of the (K-12) classroom. In these cases, you may choose to order this book instead of *Tales As Tools*. I also recommend it as a supplementary reading for anyone who wants to deepen their personal experience with storytelling, or develop their creative process outside of the classroom.

Mellon, Nancy, Storytelling and the Art of Imagination. ISBN: 0938756664

Please begin reading texts before class begins.

Attendance Policy: Students must participate in all class sessions. The course is 3 credits, equivalent to 45 hours of class attendance.

Grading Policy: Students will be evaluated on the following assignments. (See handout on grading criteria for more detail.)

I) Participation in classroom discussion and storytelling activities.**II) Performance of a traditional story.**

Each student will work with a traditional folktale or story, developing and telling it through a variety of activities in class. Performances of these stories will be featured in a "storytelling festival," on the last day of class. If the class is ambitious, they may choose to invite family and friends to participate as audience members in our "festival."

We will learn to create a time, place, and ritual for stories to be told. Though they are not necessary, simple props for staging the storytelling "festival" can be effective. Props can be as simple as a flower in a vase, stones or candles. They may connect to an image in your story. For example, a story in which apples are important, might have a wooden bowl of apples on a table near the teller.

Participants may choose to make audio or video-tapes to document their performances.

III) A Storytelling Journal (that includes. . .)

1) A table of contents, the syllabus, and course handouts.

2) Class notes

3) Journal reflections. Keep a journal or personal diary on your thoughts, reactions, and ideas on developing your folktale for performance, for classroom activities, reflections on what storytelling means to you personally, or in your role as an educator. Make at least four entries.

4) Reading notes or a reflective paper on one of the texts. Jot down main ideas and points of interest. Include any ideas that the texts generate for activities that you would like to develop in your classroom. Keep these notes or paper simple. These will be used for a seminar discussion.

5) A Bibliography:

Put your first and last name at the top of the page.

A) Cite the source of your folktale/story

B) List four additional books or resources that you have found helpful, either as sources of stories or as references on storytelling. Include complete bibliographic references and a brief description of each source. You will make enough copies for each person in the class. These should be put into your storytelling portfolio as additional resources on storytelling.

6) Summary of a story from your personal or family history. This biographical can be adapted from activities that we do in class., i.e. "Naming Stories" and other events of personal/ family history.

Activities for Developing a Folktale (Some of these will be done in class.)

7) Cite the source of your story. Insert a xerox copy and write a brief summary.

8) An explication of your folktale/story.

Write a (2-3 page) essay that includes your personal thoughts and reflections about what the story means. Ask yourself, "What is the message that lies between the words of the story?" Explore themes that the story suggests. Can you find other versions of the same story? Are there parallels that you can relate to stories from other traditions? What does the story suggest about the landscape, environment or culture traditions of its origin? You may also give examples of how you plan to integrate the story into classroom curriculum. There is no limit on length.

9) An outline of your folktale/ story.

10) A Map of your traditional story. (Fold up your map and put it in a pouch or folder.)

11) A dialogue "script" of your folktale/story.

12) A Special Project: Each student will meet with the instructor to discuss and develop their idea for a final project. You may already have an idea for a project that will allow you to use storytelling in your classroom. However, it can be **One** of the Following:

A) Performance Props: Create a storytelling banner or professional looking props to use as a backdrop and focal point for storytelling in your classroom. Storytelling banners usually hang as a backdrop for performances. They can be made with muslin, acrylic paint, or other supplies. You may also create a props such as a storytelling tree, puppet theatre, vests, aprons, hats, etc. Follow the same procedure as for the storytelling banner. You must document your project in your journal.

a) Include a picture of your banner or project.

b) In one page, describe the following

-What was the process? How did you achieve your effect?

-List the materials and resources used in creating your project.

-How will you use your storytelling banner or prop in your classroom?

-Do you have additional ideas for how to incorporate visual arts with storytelling? What projects integrating storytelling and visual arts did you do with your students?

B) Document an oral history project with your family, (students) or community.

a) Follow the "Tips For Taping Oral History Interviews," that I handed out in class. (If you worked with video or computer technology, describe the process that you used. List materials).

b) Include all ethnographic information: date, time, and location of interview, names of those present. Tape numbers, etc.

Option I: Doing an oral history with your family and students.

a) Interview a significant person in your family. Transcribe or write a brief summary of the contents of the interview.

b) Find a way to share appropriate stories with your students. You might tell the story or write a children's book of one of your family stories. For example, interview your grandmother about an extraordinary time in her life; then tell and write her story as a children's book for your classroom.

c) Give a statement evaluating the success of the project. What worked well? What would you change if you did it again? What did you connect with? How could you develop the project in the future?

d) How will you have students tell their own stories?

Option II: Develop a curriculum project or activity for doing an oral history project with your students or community. (If you are not in session, adapt this activity to meet your needs.)

a) Have students interview each other, members of their families, or an individual in the community.

b) Outline your lesson plan. Give a statement of the concepts and objectives of your project.

c) Give a summary of the themes, topics, or stories to be shared.

d) List materials, or resources that you used to develop the project.

e) If stories are taped, develop a permission form.

f) Compile the names of the storytellers, parents, or volunteers.

g) Give a statement evaluating the success of the project. What worked well? What did the students connect with? What did the storytellers who were interviewed connect with? How would you develop the project in the future?

C) Develop a curriculum activity to use storytelling to teach a specific subject or topic. You may explore how to use storytelling to teach across different curriculum areas. Some examples might include how can you integrate storytelling into multi-cultural arts education, natural history, math and science, language arts, visual arts, music, or other topics. Write a curriculum plan that addresses the following issues.

a) Outline a lesson plan for a specific age group.

b) Give a statement of the concepts, themes, and objectives of your project.

- c) List materials
- d) List the stories, research, or resource materials that you used to develop the project.
- e) Give a statement evaluating the success of the project. What worked well? What did the students connect with? How would you develop the project in the future? What would you change if you did it again?

13) Self Assessment: 1-2 pages. A Final Integrative Statement that explores: a) The Performance and process of developing a story; b) The Readings and Storytelling Journal; and c) How you plan to use storytelling in the classroom.

Storytelling Journals are due August 1, 2003 You will work on the Storytelling Journal (1-12) between the two weekends. Your work will be evaluated and returned during the second weekend.

Final Assessment Paper is due August 14, 2003. Your final assessment statement (13) must be mailed to the instructor by August 14th. Mail to: Rebecca Chamberlain, PO Box 11958 Olympia, WA 98508-1958.

Make Up Policy: Students must complete all projects as scheduled. In some cases, with prior arrangement, late journals or projects can be mailed to the instructor by August 14th. They must contain full postage for return mailing.

Supplemental Materials:

Students must supply: A notebook, drawing paper & colored markers for mapping stories and scripting dialogue. If you choose to record your performances, recording equipment, audio, or video tapes must be supplied.

Bring blankets and pillows for activities that involve sitting on the floor.

People think in terms of stories. They understand the world in terms of stories that they have already understood. New events or problems are understood by reference to old previously understood stories and explained to others by the use of stories. We understand personal problems and relationships between people through stories that typify those situations. We also understand just about everything else this way as well. Scientists have prototypical scientific success and failure stories that they use to help them with new problems. Historians have their favorite stories in terms of which they understand and explain the world. Stories are very basic to the human thinking process.

Roger Schank

Recommended Readings:

Barton, Bob. *Tell Me Another: Storytelling and Reading Aloud at Home, at School and in the Community.*

Bob Barton and David Booth. *Stories In The Classroom.*

Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment; The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales.*

Chamberlain, Rebecca. *"The Work Of The Winds" A Resource Guide of Wetland Stories and Activities.*

Colum, Padric and Joseph Campbell. *The Complete Grimm's Fairy Tales.*

Erdoes, Richard and Alfonso Ortiz. *American Indian Myths and Legends.*

Hilbert, Vi. *Haboo, Native Stories Of Puget Sound.*

Kane, Sean, *The Wisdom of the Mythtellers.*

Livo and Rietz. *Storytelling; Process and Practice.*

Mellon, Nancy. *Storytelling and the Art of Imagination.*

Ong, Walter. *Orality and Literacy.*

Sawyer, Ruth. *The Way Of The Storyteller.*

Sobol, Joseph, *The Stortellers' Journey: An American Revival.*

Tedlock, Dennis. *The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation.*

Thompson, Stith. *One Hundred Favorite Folktales.*

Von Franz, Marie Louise. *Interpretation Of Fairytales.*

Wigginton, Elliot. *Sometimes a Shining Moment; The Project.*

Wolkstein, Diane. *The Magic Orange Tree and Other Hatian Folktales.*

Glassie, Richard. *Irish Folktales.*

Zipes, Jack. *Happily Ever After, Fairy Tales, Children, and the Culture Industry.*