

Questionnaire: Bridges Storytelling Workshop October 12, 2007
Presenter: Carol Esterreicher, Ed.S./member Utah Storytelling Guild

Of the 20 attending, 14 consented to being quoted. For an immediate summary, Only some quotes may be acknowledged although the essence of the responses can be reviewed below.

Salt Lake Community College, Salt Lake, Granite, and Jordan School Districts were represented

What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the word “storytelling?”

Fun, retelling stories, reading stories to groups, telling stories to groups books, children, imagination, fairy tales, tall tales, books, creating facts or scenarios to make or hide a point, telling stories to children, a children’s story book being read to a classroom, a circle of children surrounding an adult telling/reading a story, trying to explain a situation to an individual who is unfamiliar with the situation you are explaining, families telling stories about members. Every perspective is personal. Every single thing that has happened is somebody’s story! **Patty Smith** (Hillsdale) indicated that listening came to mind as well as telling.

What is the one single thing you expect to gain from this storytelling workshop?

Participants wanted to improve storytelling skills and to learn a variety of ways to present and share stories. **Genele Febr** (Spring Lane) wanted ideas on how to gain and maintain the interest of a group.

Here are some of the responses:

- Ideas about relating storytelling to school subjects
- How to improve my storytelling skills
- How to tell a story so people will listen
- How to increase children’s love for stories
- To better articulate my ideas when explaining situations to others
- A little bit of Carol Esterreicher
- Different ways to present stories
- Different ways to share stories
- How to be a great storyteller
- I want to make children interested from the beginning until the end.
- Different story subjects
- How to improve strategies for storytelling
- How to communicate better with children
- Develop linear communication skills and focus on non-bottom-line communication
- Ways to evoke more creativity and get children involved and interested
- Ways to make storytelling more fun
- How to tell a story with expression and to make it fun
- Different ways to retell a story
- Creativity

Improved ability to relate

What stories do you like to tell?

It was interesting to hear the wide range of story preferences expressed.

Kristel Sixma (Nibley Park) says, "I like to tell personal stories particularly about my dogs."

Ken Elliott (Brookwood) and **Sharon Walkington** (Emerson) like to tell history stories.

Here are some other responses:

History stories, personal stories, personal experience, life experiences, stories about my dogs, ones with meaning, sometimes just plain silly stories, funny and humorous stories, children's stories with a lot of pictures, pretend real events, sports, all kinds, science fiction, non-fiction, fiction, mystery, colorful stories, sad, melancholic, adventure, scary, stories with different characters to act out, fairy tales, Mother Goose, parables.

Tell me one thing you already do well when you tell a story.

Several workshop participants recognized their skills at relating and responding to their audiences. Several, including **Stephanie Herrig (Nibley Park)**, **Amber Smith (SLCC)**, and **Chris Bode (Park Lane)** expressed their satisfaction with using their voices to dramatize and differentiate characters. **Dina Miranda** likes to use a lot of pictures to illustrate her stories and maintain students' attention. **Don Bode** says he gets excited and animated.

Here are some of the comments.

I see what can make a story.

Voice changes, voice modulation

Relate the story to the person I am explaining to.

I listen. I want it to feel a certain way, so I listen to the audience, see if they are feeling it.

Read well.

I explain the pictures to retain their attention (even though they still get distracted)

Dramatize

Change voice to emphasize the story.

Ensure the bottom line/story ending is addressed.

Placing myself in the character's shoes, and vocal inflections to add emotion, excitement.

Use expressions, get excited, animated

Just to sit and tell a story

What do you want me to know about you?

Knowing about individuals can provide clues regarding the kinds of stories they might tell well.

Hear are some of the responses:

I love to travel. I like geography, geology, paleontology, history, etc.

I am honest and trustworthy.

I love my dog (Idaho) and my parakeet (Mojito)

I care.

I love soccer!

I am working with America Reads. I love kids.

I love to read.

I would like the people I help to love to read as well.

I am the world's 2nd oldest geek.

Antonio Dudley proclaimed his great love for words! "I am a poet, essayist, songwriter, singer, musician, artist, computer graphic enthusiast, volunteer, mentor, perfectionist, philosopher, vocabulary builder, dictionary nerd." I expect that he'll be adding "storyteller" to the list very soon!

I love children and children's stories.

I love to read thriller books.

I love the outdoors.

I love people.

After the Storytelling Workshop:

Presenter: Carol Esterreicher

Of the 20 attending, 13 agreed to be quoted at some point in the future.

What did you like best about the Storytelling Workshop?

Many participants commented on the presenter's energy and enthusiasm for storytelling as well as the many examples of ways to make it fun and educational for students. **Jane Santana** expressed her impression that the students she works with may not understand the importance of arranging pictured stories in a left-to-right orientation. **Phuong Vu** (SLCCC) enjoyed the examples of making storytelling fun as well as educational for the students.

Here are examples of responses.

The whole idea of using storytelling to enumerate with children on almost any subject.

Carol's presentation had a very nice flow with nice transitions. It always enhances my experience when I believe that the speaker is knowledgeable and confident in their topic.

I enjoyed the examples of ways to implement spoonerisms.

Heidi Peters (SLCC) said, “When you told your own stories that you have written, your facial expressions were fun. You could sell anything.”

The techniques of storytelling, questions that can be asked to get students more involved.

Examples of how to make storytelling fun for kids as well as educational
I liked your energy to explain things.

The information provided and the expressive way she brought the content out.

Her examples of different styles and enthusiasm, all the storytelling ideas

The fun ideas like spoonerisms and substitutions

Ideas of using pictures in order. I’m working with kids who don’t read and I’m not sure they know about reading left to right, up to down.

Which suggestion will you put to use as soon as you have the opportunity?

Many of the participants expressed intentions to use the expanded Wh-Question Wheel and the Story Grammar Wheels that include essential story elements. Using word play strategies such as spoonerisms (reversing and rearranging sounds and syllables) and lipograms (excluding a specific sound) was enthusiastically endorsed by **Laura Dansie** (SLCCC), **Mary Ann Erickson** (David Gourley), and others as a way she can introduce fun and humor which enhancing phonemic awareness skills! Others found incorporating songs and cheers into interactive stories an inviting idea to pursue.

Here are some of what workshop participants listed:

Spoonerisms and lipograms both will be incorporated into my tutoring.

The Wh Question Wheel

Spoonerized tales and lipograms

I really like the grammar wheels, they get your creative mind turning.

Use of questions during storytelling rather than just reading the story. Interactive participation

Encourage kids to tell their own stories in their own words.

I think it will be a good idea to try to start to sing.

Songs, spoonerisms, letter and sound substitution

The cheers and songs to make

Spoonerisms and substitutions

Pointers on effective delivery

How to quickly capture the audience’s attention

How to hold and keep the audience’s attention

The story grammar wheel

Letting kids help you make up a story

Actually singing the “alphabet song” to the little kindergarteners that don’t know their letters

Grammar wheel and question wheel.

What would you like to hear more about?

Several participants, including **Neesha Nixon** (Whittier) said they would like to hear more actual stories in a workshop. Some wanted to hear more about appealing to children’s imaginations. They expressed interest in creating characters and exploring books on storytelling. A reference list of books and storytelling websites was provided though these are left for individual exploration.

Here are some of their responses:

Ideas to use with the student’s reading material

I would just like to look more into the storytelling books.

More actual storytelling

Tell some stories.

The books Carol wrote on where to find them

More of her stories.

How to do characters and expressions

I think you nailed it.

Examples of stories told in different ways --Aesop?

I would like to hear more about different/other techniques

Ways to make children open up to their imaginations

Other:

Sharon Walkington (Emerson) will try to use storytelling in math.

Antonio Dudley (SLCCC) commented that this was a “fabulously informative workshop!”

Don Bode concludes, there is “no need to say who the storytellers are—everyone is one!”