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The Power of Storytelling

Dan Manolescu
ESL Instructor and Award-Winning author, USA
Email: dan.manolescu@att.net

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Abstract

The art form of storytelling is the central idea of this article, with a quick historical note, followed by its three basic elements and their much-needed benefits; to which the power of narratives is added to inform and create, but also cause change. Motivating audiences also leads to storytelling as a useful language experience and its prowess when used properly and effectively in the classroom. Our knowledge and our life experience accumulates from the known to the unknown, and storytelling can only enhance the young learners' curiosity and fantasy. Relevant examples are brought into discussion to encourage and empower the new generations to use their creativity in stories that stimulate their imagination. The lesson learned in this context is that our creativity and our imagination are both awakened and shaped by stories.

Keywords: Knowledge, Imagination, Creativity, Motivation, Language Learning

1. Introduction

Storytelling is an interactive process whereby narrators and their audiences share their experience through the act of a story. And every story has heroes and examples that captivate when the storyteller knows how to engage the audience's attention and, in the process, entertain, educate, and transmit knowledge. Online sources are replete with relevant information regarding the craft of storytelling. Acccording to Glatch (2024), "Storytelling is the process of weaving language into a concrete narrative, with the purpose of creating rich, believable experiences." (Glatch, 2024, n.p.) When addressing the educational benefits of storytelling in "Resources for Teaching," Joel Brady (2023) argues that "Good storytelling can make for great teaching, and an effective teacher is often a skilled storyteller. Among the many intersections between storytelling and teaching, the most fundamental is this: Education represents transformations in students' thinking – through discovery, expansion, revision, failure or correction. Similarly, a good story is characterized by transformation: characters change, reflect, adapt, grow, discover, succeed and fail." (Brady, 2023, n.p.). As such, storytelling has been the main focus for educators like Peterson (2017), Lewis (2011) and Polletta et al. (2011). The consensus is that storytelling is a means of communication that involves culture, values, and tradition. Pasquale de Marco (2025) adds another dimension when he says that "Imagination is the spark that ignites the flame of storytelling. It is the power that allows us to create new worlds, new characters, and new stories that can transport us to other realms and other tims." (p. 61). Using the prowess of creativity and imagination in writing, the present article analyzes storytelling not only as a means of communication, but also as a language experience, relevant in education, in business, in entertainment, as well as a powerful element in recording history.

2. Discussion

2.1. Storytelling as a Means of Communication

In this ever-changing society of active, avid readers, and information seekers, stories have become an integral part of our culture and civilization. If we are true to ourselves, we go instinctively for the intensive cultivation of the mind that comes with storytelling. We should not forget that at the root of the word and the discipline of history is that simple word: story. Stories in this context make up a considerable portion of our history, our culture – orally, visually, and in written form. According to Davies (2007):

> Records of storytelling have been found in many ancient cultures and languages, including Sanskrit, Old German, Latin, Chinese, Greek, Icelandic, and Old Slavonic. The Celtic bards used storytelling as a way of making sense of their origins, a way to build a common history. They would chronicle events through poetic narrations, epic tales that are preserved to this day in folklore and legend. (Davies, 2007, p. 3)

Poetic narrations, tales, folklore, and legends have preserved truthful records over time. The preservation of storytelling as a means of communication is an important component of our daily routine and has developed over time as an art form because "it fulfilled an aesthetic need for beauty, regularity and form through expressive language and music" (ibid., p. 4). From the perspective of scholars, linguists and historians, storytelling is quite difficult to define or classify. According to Pellowski (1991), storytelling can be defined as:

> The art or craft of narration of stories in verse/and in prose, as performed or led by one person before a live audience; the stories narrated may be spoken, chanted, or sung, with or without musical pictorial, and/or other accompaniment and may be learned from oral, printed or mechanically recorded sources; one of its purposes may be that of entertainment. (Pellowski, 1991, p. 15)

Stories, therefore, because we enjoy them so much, need to be told and storytellers are everywhere. What we sometimes need is a piece of advice to remind us that stories, simple of sophisticated, short or not so short, can be extremely effective. They just need to be told. Pete Seeger (2001) believes that powerful stories are "etched into our memories," and "they are easy to retell" (Seeger, 2001, p. 5). And he goes one step further and emphasizes the idea that, when we tell and retell stories, we create an atmosphere of sharing. In the same vein, Seeger elucidates:

> Just because we have cars and buses shouldn't mean we forget to walk. And just because we have books an television sets shouldn't mean we forget how to tell stories. They needn't be virtuoso stories. And you don't have to look far Tell about your family, your friends. Tell about the nation's history or a people's history. Tell a moral tale or a silly one. Tell stories even if they are only the bare plot. (ibid., p. 7)

If we heed Pete Seeger's advice, we realize that stories are a wonderful source of information but they are also a proven method of imparting wisdom, especially if the storyteller resorts to family stories, tales from someone's past, new versions of familiar legends, or just stories that need to be told, heard, or read.

According to Bowles et alia (2022), throughout our history, storytelling has served many purposes. "Sharing stories aloud is one of mankind's best attributes – our magical ability to shape-shift into each other's imaginations with the spoken word. Because we have the capacity for imagination, stories being other people's experience to life, so we can see, and very often feel, events that didn't happen to us" (Bowles et al., p. 4). The authors argue that besides sharing knowledge, our stories explain and decode history; stories viewed from this perspective, have the power "to make families, friendship, and love possible" (ibid). We might venture to say that stories – well told, interesting, and persuasive – teach us how to go across cultures and how to craft stories out of mere or irrelevant incidents.

2.2. Stories Help Us Connect with Each Other

There are all kinds of stories, and some of them are great stories – those that go beyond the narrative and take us into an unexpected but marvelous new world. As such, stories need storytellers so we can connect with other human beongs through this quest for knowledge and information called story, with its three componenets. As Rodriguez (2023) states,

> We know a story is made of three basic elements: a character, plot, and conclusion. In other words, we can say that if you are able to introduce these three elements to any type of content, it will inevitably become a story. (Rodriguez, 2023, Preface)

When such contents become a story, and if the story is well told, it will have an enormous effect on the audience, who wil understand the significance of the subject and the lesson to be learned. Nevertheless, these audiences should know that there are also protagonists or any other characters in the story. According to Fog et al. (2005),

> In order to get personally involved with a story, we, as readers or listeners, must be able to identify with the characters. This happens especially when we recognize a little bit of ourselves in the charcaters of the story. Here, it is important to keep your target audience in mind. The audience must be able to identify with both the hero and the problem. We recognize feelings like sorrow, despair, joy, fear, or hope. (Fog et al., 2005, p. 39)

Emotions will have to be a necessary ingredient, so information is connected with the way we feel, think, and act. Even the most boring stories can become powerful if we make them part of our communication with family members, acquaintances, colleagues, and friends in a way that everybody – the narrator and the audience – work through a character, plot, and conclusion based our most inner feelings and sentiments. The same authors go even further and opine that it is a pleasure to exchange ideas and opinions, to see that there is something valuable that binds us together and makes a story so viable. "Stories are also great at influencing and transferring values. We see it in all aspects of history and since the dawn of time. Stories have been used

from the genesis or mankind to teach guiding principles and shape behaviors that irrefutably enabled our survival as a race" (ibid.). As such, our auditory, olfactory, visual, sensory and motor cortices become activated as soon as we hear or read a good story.

With little time left for perusing a good source of information, let's say a book, a magazine, or a journal, readers are attracted to a literary form that can be easily absorbed and digested. We sometimes look for a shorter format, but at the same time for something that is appealing, pithy, informative, and also entertaining. In the middle of our daily routine of jokes, anecdotes, novels, novellas, movies, plays, songs, text messages, memes, we are never satisfied unless or until we can read, or we can hear a good story.

2.3. The Multi-Faceted Benefits o Storytelling

Authors create new stories with their own characters through the activity of storytelling. The text of these stories does not necessarily describe any real facts, but the message and the lessons we learn will stay with us if and because stories are interesting, informative, or because they engage the audience's imagination.

A good story, because of its simplicity, will stay with us for a very long time. We always go back to the stories we heard when we were young or younger, and we usually expect a nice story when we read a book or watch a movie. Stories are essentially the basic element of literature, and can be used as a joke, as a lesson in humanity, or to illustrate a point during a debate. Businesses masterfully use the basic element of storytelling when they borrow characters from well-known stories and name their products or services after them. According to Mathews and Wacker (2008), "Long before the first formal business was established, before the first deal, the six most powerful words in any language were Let me tell you a story" (Matthews and Wacker, 2008, Introduction, p. 1). We also find stories in any other form of social communication, in advertising when companies provide examples like "Discover Pathfinder – tell better stories"; in business transactions, in family reunions, in classroom activities – to name a few.

The act of storytelling involves a narrator, a certain story, and their audience. The storyteller performs a narrative that comes from life experience or from reading valuable lessons in human and public relations. Like in teaching, there are two components worth mentioning: First comes the story itself, that is what the audience reads or hears. A very important factor is the content of the story itself. Next comes something which might be even more important: how the message is related to the audience, to their interest or perception. In other words, there is sometimes a dialogue between the narrator and his/her audience. The power of storytelling becomes relevant if "the story can be heard, seen, and felt" (Langellier and Peterson, 2004, p. 9). Therefore, the message should be conveyed in such a way that the audience learns a lesson in the process, and the gist of the narrative becomes meaningful for storyteller and audience alike. Salzberg (2011) provides a good example of such a story:

> You may have heard the old story, usually attributed to a Native American elder, meant to illuminate the power of attention. A grandfather (occasionally it's a grandmother) imparting a life lesson to his grandson tells him, 'I have two wolves fighting in my heart. One wolf is vengeful, fearful, envious, resentful, deceitful. The other wolf is loving, compassionate, generous, truthful, and serene.' The grandson asks which wolf will win the fight. The grandfather answers, 'The one I feed.' (Salzberg, 2011, p. 9)

The story, in this vein, succeeds in sending a message if the audience shows any interest – by paying attention, of course – and if the narration is performed by matching the verbiage, the context, and the expectation that a message is heard and a lesson is not only conveyed by also learned.

According to Storr (2020), "There is simply no way to understand the human world without stories." The author goes on and clarifies why stories are so important:

> It's story that makes us human. Recent research suggest language evolved principally to swap "social information" back when we were living in Stone Age tribes. In other words, we'd gossip. We'd tell tales about the moral rights and wrongs of other people, punish the bad behavior, reward the good, and thereby keep everyone cooperating and the tribe in check. Stories about people being heroic or villainous, and the emotions of joy and outrage they triggered, were crucial to human survival. We're wired to enjoy them. (Storr, 2020, Introduction, p. 1)

The result of telling stories, reading or hearing them, is obvious: It gives us pleasure, and that is why we enjoy them so much. And there are many reasons we like stories, but there is one thing certain: stories are everywhere, in newspapers, magazines, sporting events, entertainment shows, song lyrics, classroom activities, because stories make up a big chunk of our daily routine, and mostly because stories are us.

2.4. Narratives Inform and Create – They Can also Cause Change

Many stories are powerful because they cause change – change in understanding, in behavior, in expectations, and especially a definite change in our brain perception. "Almost all perception is based on the detection of change" (Storr, 2020, p. 1). Therefore, it is the goal of a good story to teach the brain something new and, in the process, effect change. When good stories provide novel ideas, we obviously perceive a significant change.

When change is detected, something happens in our brain and the story draws the attention of the audience, if the storytellers know what to do and how to do it right:

> They create moments of unexpected change that seize the attention of their protagonists and, by extension, their readers and viewers. Those who've tried to unravel the secrets of story have long known about the significance of change. Aristotle argued that 'peripeteia,' a dramatic turning point, is one of the most powerful moments in drama, whilst the story theorist and celebrated commissioner of screen drama John Yorke has written that "the image every

> TV director in fact or fiction always looks for its close-up of the human face as it registers change." (Storr, 2020, p. 2)

Besides change, stories are what they are – narratives that inform but also create an aura of something remarkable and beautiful.

People always enjoy those stories that audiences will understand, follow, and remember for a long time. Pete Seeger (2000) shares his story:

> Luckily, successful storytelling doesn't depend on a story's length. A quick personal anecdote can capture a child's attention as easily as a long tale. You might use an example from your own childhood. At eighty years of age, I still remember an embarrassing story from when I was six. My parents gave me a dime and sent me down the block to buy something that cost a nickel. I don't recall what the item was, but I met a neighbor's kid at the store, and with the extra five cents we bought a candy bar. When I got back home, my father asked, 'Peter, where is the change? 'It cost ten cents,' I said, my voice wobbling.
> "Peter, you know you don't need to lie to us,' my father said. "What happened to other nickel?' Now I was bawling.
> 'I got some candy,' I gasped through the tears.
> 'That's perfectly all right,' my father said.' You know we love you. You don't ever have to lie to us.' He said that over and over. (Seeger, 2000, p. 4)

Such stories have acquired an enormous importance because they teach life lessons. Children and students of all ages, if the right moment is chosen, will find a meaning behind the stories if they are led to decipher and understand what stories are all about. While listening with a clear purpose, the audience will definitely experience a journey into new territories of uncharted imagination and new vocabulary that will provide food for thought, and in the process, become trained in their learning development.

2.5. The Power of Stories to Motivate

Motivating students is a challenging task, but if teachers and storytellers follow certain basic steps, the result comes with an exciting feeling of accomplishment. Any story with an active audience participation will have to be presented through the eyes and ears of them audience, with their present-day feelings and concerns. The story itself should be told from the view of those in the audience, and would be quite successful if we start with a memory hook. Furthermore, it would also be a good idea to let the listeners ask questions and take an active part in the storytelling.

Motivation can be explained in simple words that students understand and relate to. Teachers and storytellers can empower their audience by inspiring them to have big dreams, to be inquisitive and have endless curiosity, to have a feeling of wonder and try to discover new things everywhere they go, and find joy in being playful. Stimulating students to search for their inner power to unravel curious new concepts and ideas is a major motivation clue that brings about creativity at its utmost and highest level.

Other views regarding motivation will mention several Dos and Don'ts: Learn from the best and see how they do it; be yourself and try things "your way"; don't be afraid to be different; don't wait for anything to happen to change your attitude. Some young learners are also encouraged to develop their own routine and trust their own choices. If failures often pave the road to success, students should not be discouraged, but, instead, learn from their own mistakes and failures. Making plans and envisioning the future is sometimes based on some things we have already seen or experienced ourselves or in the life of others. As Noot (2019) remarks:

> In the movie Turbo, which is a children's movie, a Mexican guy tells a snail who is injured, 'We came so far. It's good enough,' to which the snail, Turbo, responds, 'It's not.' Even if you don't like the entire movie, you gotta love that movement, right? The moment that he decides, with a determination in his eyes and in his voice, that he will go on instead of give up. (Noot, 2019, p. 6)

Life lessons in persistence, not giving up, would in this case relate a personal experience and sum up the gist of the movie. Avid readers who like to share their personal experience can function as motivators if they know how to appeal to the audience. Things have changed a lot over time, and nowadays we are dealing with a new generation of learners who are at the same time excellent thinkers looking for information. According to Walsh (2013):

> If speakers want analytical thinkers to remember information for any length of time, they create points and put them in a creative order. For instance, they can have all the words in the outline start with the same letter. Better yet, the first letter of all the points can spell out a word. They don't feel the need to include a story, unless it reinforced the outline. Stories are props that illustrate the points, so they are no longer called stories. They are called illustrations. (Walsh, 2013, n.p.)

To illustrate a point, storytellers can learn a lot from teachers, parents, grandparents, counselors, business people, medical professionals, and others. We learn a lot from people who are willing to share their own experience – even if or when a professional storyteller is telling stories to adults. With little or no preparation for a forethought, the same author confides:

> I sat enthralled and captivated. Wow! I thought. I want to do that. Jan [My wife] turned to me and said, 'You ought to do that.' That started my long walk into a new world. I went to storytelling festivals, conferences, and workshops. I learned from people who were not generally good public speakers but were masters at telling stories. They became my teachers, and I was their eager student. It wasn't as easy as it seemed; still, I saw the potential. The power of a story has turned thick walls into open doors. (Walsh, 2013, n.p.)

Whether we are talking about the art of storytelling to children, young learners, or adults, the experience is the same. A feeling that we are enthralled and captivated.

2.6. Storytelling Is a Useful Language Experience

Children's imagination is a powerful and energetic learning tool, and if we tackle this idea from the point of view of those who are willing to improve their overall learning skills, we find ourselves in a very fertile territory. "Language learning is a complex, abstract task mastered very early" (Egan, 1989, p. 6). If we combine the power of imagination with the young learners' ability to grow from the concrete to the abstract, stories are the best vehicle. Language in the shape of a story is thus enhanced and developed through the children's understanding that they must make a mental effort to make the quantum leap. According to Egan, The Lord of the Rings is one of the best examples to prove this point:

> The parts of the narrative that are most comprehensible and engaging are those whose meaning turns the child's understanding of abstract concepts like loyalty/betrayal, courage/cowardice, honor/selfishness. Without such concepts most of the concrete action in the book is meaningless. Such concepts are not generated by the actions; the abstract concepts have to be already understood for the actions to make sense. (ibid., p. 8)

The author goes on and argues that "Stories make sense as stories only if we already have some abstract notion of plot to organize and make meaningful the effective force of the story" (ibid., p. 9). Such arguments are usually based on the idea that our knowledge in general and our life experience accumulates gradually from the known to the unknown. "Are wicked witches and talking middle-class worms so prominent a part of the known of children? Well, in one sense of course we must say yes. Such figures are all around them in books and on TV" (ibid., p. 13). And this adds fuel to the idea that young children's fantasy stories and their own imaginative games are so engaging. "They represent something about the vivid imaginative creativity of the human mind" (ibid.). Imagination and creativity can really work wonders.

When people want to cause great amusement, what they need is a good story, and that has to be a good story well told. Marshall (2025) finds the word mondegreen a good example of an interesting narrative: "A mondegreen is a misheard word or phrase that, despite the mishearing, still makes some sense. For example, the child who asked their parents who the 'good Mrs. Murphy' was that they sang about in church; it took a while to discover that the hymn in question had the line, 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me.' 'Goodness and mercy' had been misheard as 'good Mrs. Murphy'" (Marshall, 2025, n.p.). Another interesting explanation comes from Mohr (2020): "Renaissance dramatists loved mondegreens. Shakespeare's 'The Merry Wives of Windsor,' for example, features a whole scene of them, when the innkeeper Mistress Quickly has trouble understanding a Latin lesson and interprets pulcher ('beautiful') as polecats. Sigmund Freud thought that some mondegreens – verhören ("mishearing") in German – were the aural equivalent of the better-known 'Freudian slips.' He theorized that such mistakes represent suppressed emotions or anxieties" (Mohr, 2020, n.p.).

According to Jason Chase, ESL Instructor, "The term 'mondegreen' has become increasingly noticeable in our social media and news, and as early as 2000 was included in the Random House Webster's College Dictionary. But before giving a dictionary definition, we may first explore the definitive source of this word. Many words in our language have obscure or arguable etymological roots; 'mondegreen' is not one of them. In the November 1954 issue of Harper's Magazine, the American writer/journalist Sylvia Wright, who is credited with coining the term in her essay entitled "The Death of Lady Mondegreen," provides a personal journey of discovery when she recounted how she had listened to a poem recited to her by her mother:

> When I was a child, my mother used to read aloud to me from Percy's Reliques ("The Bonnie Earl o' Molay" [Child Ballads 181; Roud Folk Song Index 334]), and one of my favorite poems began, as I remember:
>
> Ye Highlands and ye Lowlands,
> Oh, where hae ye been?
> They hae slain the Earl Amurray
> And Lady Mondegreen.

Because this poem was read orally to her, young Ms. Wright didn't realize that 'And Lady Mondegreen' was actually 'And laid him on the green.' The phenomenon of mishearing lyrics (particularly in popular music tunes) is obviously nothing new, but finally, we had a word for it.

Some well-known mondegreeens are Jimi Hendrix' 'Scuse me while I kiss the sky misheard as 'Scuse me while I kiss this guy and The Beatles' Lady Madonna as knee-deep in doughnuts. Much like the children's game telephone – wherein a circle of people starts with a message, and, as it is whispered from one person to the next, morphs into something else – the phenomenon of misheard quotes, especially in music, is as old as language itself. Thanks to Sylvia Wright, it now has a name. (Jason Chase, ESL Instructor)

This is a very good example of an etymological story – interesting and informative – that will stay with its audience for a very long time.

2.7. Stories in the Classroom

A historical event like 9/11 might provide a good starting point for a project to prove that personal life experiences can turn into amazing stories. One of my dear colleagues who worked with us in New York City on that fateful day shared some of his ideas:

2.7.1. "Non-Fiction Writing as Testimony

I here present four reasons for writing stories in the classroom using non-fiction testimonial. The goals would be the following:

1. To release observation skills.

2. To overcome and diminish anxiety about writing. Just 'write that happened.'
3. To impart a personal response to an idea or experience.
4. To experience satisfaction of accomplishment.

For this purpose, two strategies are necessary:

1. Describe an event; bear testimony.
2. Reflect on its impact and meaning.

Individually or in a group, students are given a non-fiction assignment: a response to the collapse of the Twin Towers in New York City on 9/11. Students were in class, mere blocks away, and directed to immediately vacate the building, which was in the danger zone.

Examples of a non-fiction assignment which students in my ESL class experienced first-hand successfully achieved the four criteria above. The event successfully and easily released an urgent flow of testimony, which attests to the student's originality and creativity in a sample of non-fiction writing as testimony. (Paul Serrato, ESL Professor)

2.7.2. Storytelling in Business

Since everybody loves a good story, business people are also looking into the prospect of using such narratives in everyday business lives. Candice Georgiadis (2023), social media influencer and founder of Digital Day Inc., makes the following statement:

> Visualize this: You are browsing a website that exclusively offers organic skincare products. A dozen similar products with the same features and claims are presented to you. The question is, how do you choose which of these items to buy? Now, on the other hand, say you find a particular product that uses a unique angle: storytelling. The company tells the story of how the product founder's daughter battled with acne for many years and tried every product on the market, but no skincare product worked. The founder goes on to tell a story about how she discovered a natural ingredient that challenged her daughter's skin and life. Which product do you think you would pick or buy first? Most likely, it would be the product with a story. The reason is that stories have the power to grab attention, connect with emotion and persuade us to take action. (Georgiadis, 2023, n.p.)

A similar approach comes from Kurnoff and Lazarus (2021), who invite readers to consider the idea that "Storytelling is how we move business forward" (Kurnoff and Lazarus, 2021, p. 1). Along the same lines, Dietz and Silverman (2013) assert that "We believe that business storytelling is the most critical skill set to hit the business arena in ages. […] Although it takes a little time to put the strategies, tools, and techniques of story into action, the results are striking" (Dietz and Silverman, 2013, Introduction, p. 1).

Another example comes from a good friend and colleague of mine, Ralph Herdman, an experienced Business English educator:

> One might not consider an undergraduate business course in International Management a place for the most imaginative and engaging stories. In such a class students look deeply into all the considerations when a company in a country decides to expand overseas and eventually deals with the challenges of managing a global organization. Among the considerations are cultural differences in foreign markets, business and legal strategies for achieving success overseas, and the right leadership approach for balancing growth with proper controls. To reframe the discussion, all companies in the global arena have a multitude of stories to tell.
>
> Imagine the fictitious company Big Widget that has an established and successful business in the U.S. They are the protagonist of our story. Big Widget feels that they can succeed in the European market and become a hero to customers eager to buy their exceptional products and services. However, the company is likely to face off against various antagonists along their journey. Even so-called friendly governments may have onerous regulatory hoops to jump through before a foreign entity can do business in their countries. Local competitors in those countries likely have a deep knowledge of the nuances of the local markets and culture. Even if Big Widget thinks they have something superior to offer, those competitors have a home-field advantage and may be much more formidable than expected. If Big Widget needs to rely on local European employees for production and customer service, they may be surprised to find it very challenging to deal with labor unions and employment requirements that don't exist in the U.S. Initial optimism can often run head into the realities that global expansion is really hard.
>
> Nonetheless, Big Widget may have the wisdom, fortitude, and resources to overcome a multitude of challenges. They may well find receptive governments that have their own agendas for welcoming the company. Big Widget may develop relationships with the right local partners which give them valuable insights about the market and access to a network of potential clients. The company's success may hinge upon unexpected uses of their products and open new avenues to explore. Like other companies before them, Big Widget may well fight their way to success despite being knocked down multiple times and wondering if the effort is worth it.
>
> Students in such an International Management course will likely read stories and case studies of real companies and the intricacies of global expansion. The authors of such case studies often dwell on details and practices that make reading the documents a slog, even if there is a learning purpose. Underneath the complex verbiage, though, are stories of obstacles, growth, and triumph (or failure) that can be illuminating for students if presented in the right way. Many of these students aspire to become future business leaders. It is the role of teachers to bring out their students' inherent desire to read about and connect with compelling stories. (Ralph Herdman, Business English Professor)

Good stories can also teach good lessons in the classroom. Whether we talk about words or idiomatic expressions, a good story can replace a lengthy and boring explanation. Instead, an interesting story about the etymology of a word will undoubtedly remain imprinted in the learners' mind. Here are some examples:

> During the battle of Copenhagen in 1801, the flagship commander signaled to Lord Nelson that he should stop attacking the Danish fleet and retreat. Nelson held a telescope to his blind eye and said, 'I do not see the signal.' Having disobeyed the order, Nelson continued to attack and won the battle. This incident has come to be known as turning a blind eye. (Archer, 2021, author's note on inside cover)

How did we get the word sincere? Its etymology is a story in itself: Long before people used money as a medium of exchange, they used to give each other gifts. The legend says that small objects of art, like small stones depicting gods, animals, or birds, were offered as gifts. When such gifts were handed down from generation to generation, because they were broken or had small cracks, the gift givers used to patch up the irregularities with wax (cera in Latin). When the present was given, the receivers wanted to make sure that the art object was real or new, so they asked: sine cera? In other words, "without wax?" And this is how we got the word sincere. In less than ten lines the reader will remember the etymology or the history of the word. At the same time, a quick exercise in eliciting information from students can easily give us the meaning of the above-mentioned words.

If you prefer a shorter story, you can try the word window. Centuries ago, there were no windows, but most houses had a small opening to let the air in. The people called such an opening the wind eye, which in time became window.

The world of information is a necessary commodity today and people prefer to look for it in places where facts, numbers, opinions are easily accessible. Information seekers (please read teachers and students) can always benefit from stories and learn something new embedded in a nice story. According to Walsh (2013),

> These people are some of the most creative, productive citizens of our society. They want the information, and they want it straight in a way that holds their interest. You still need a theme and even an outlive; just don't let them know you have it. They don't want your clever tricks and ingenious alliterations. Stories are the best way to reach this new breed of thinker. (Walsh, 2013, n.p.)

Stories, therefore, may be the best antidote to a boring conversation, debate, discussion, or business transaction. Sometimes stories can be the funniest thing you have ever heard. At other times, stories can help us deal with an average Monday morning, or make sense of a seemingly debatable topic on the Internet. One way or another, how can you not walk out of the classroom a changed person after hearing a good story with a good lesson to learn? People are using stories everywhere, and the results are overwhelmingly positive if the audience responds with a smile in libraries, schools, business meetings, family reunions, and any other forms of social communication. The result is that our creativity and our imagination are both awakened and shaped by stories.

3. Conclusion

Most narratives or stories will be adapted or replicated, and some of them will create a trend. Take for example, the Aesop stories, or the love stories of Romeo and Juliet, Eloise and Abelard, or Ruslan and Ludmila. What makes them so interesting and so appealing is the fact that you will find more or less the same story in various cultures, across centuries, and with the same life lessons to be told. Storytelling has become a part of who we are and how we live these days, so much so that it is now embedded in everything we do. And it is not just for children. It is a form of communication with inspirational thoughts and motivating stories. The acquisition of knowledge coming from stories helps us grasp meaning and teach each other life lessons. The knowledge thus conveyed in a meaningful narrative is knowledge in the state of a story. Telling stories is like a team sport; everybody participates in this competition for knowledge, narrator and audience alike. We sometimes forget that storytelling is embedded in almost everything we do as individuals, as groups of people, as families, or even as businesses. When we tell stories and connect with each other, using our creativity and our imagination, we unleash the amazing power of narration and its multi-faceted benefits.

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