

Practical Pedagogical Ideas 1

Story-based teaching: Activities for young learners

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Storytelling has been a productive listening activity, which exposes students to lots of comprehensible input, and which has a theoretical principle, as stated by Krashen (1982). The job of a teacher is to create an atmosphere where they can engage the entire classroom, and with the art of storytelling, it never fails to attract young learners. Storytelling has been a device used in every era and different circumstances all over the world. Even in Nepal, much before the formal education began; the elderly members often told stories to educate younger members in the family. There are different kinds of stories that can be used in a classroom of young learners; some of them are traditional stories, fable tales, personal experience stories, and personal imagination stories. Any form of a story telling can be used in an English classroom, but it should match the theme of the lesson. While reading the story, picture plays a very powerful role, as it keeps the eyes as well as ears full on focus so the use of picture book has been widely used all over the world. According to Bader (1976, p.1), “a picture book is text, illustration, total

design; an item of manufacture and a commercial product; a social, cultural, historic document; and foremost an experience for a [reader]. As an art form, it hinges on two facing pages and on the drama of the turning page.” as cited in Mourie (2015).

Proficiency level: Beginner

Age Group: 4-8 years old
(preschool to grade 4)

Class Time: 60 minutes

Objectives

1. This lesson focuses on all the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) of English language teaching and learning using an example of a famous tale: “The Emperor’s New Clothes” by Hans Christian Anderson.
2. While trying to teach English as a global language, flashcards will bring images of ethnic clothes that represent different cultures into the

classroom, vocabulary of colours and vocabulary of shapes (depending on the level).

3. Actively inquire and respond regarding personal likes and dislikes, familiarizing oneself with descriptive language regarding colours and shapes.
4. Hands-on activity (designing T-shirts) will give the students a chance to use the phrase; "What _____ do you like?", having them fill in the blank with colours and shapes that describe the T-shirt.

Resources: The Emperor's New Clothes story by Hans Christian Anderson (picture book form or web searched data), flashcards to teach colours, shapes, and clothes (readily available via google image search), worksheets, coloured pencils.

Procedure

1. Introduction (10 minutes).

The teacher reads the story; "The Emperor's New Clothes", using the images via picture book or bring images from the Internet web search. While reading the story, the teacher makes a different voice to represent a different character from the story and uses TPR (Total Physical Response) to act like a king, ministers, and weavers.

2. Class discussion (5 minutes).

The teacher asks the students what morals they learned from the story

and what they felt was impressive in the story. Ask students to recall the new vocabulary they heard in the story. Ask students about the characters they liked in the story. (The discussion time is to encourage students to participate speaking in English)

3. Flashcard vocabulary introduction, clothes and review colors (10 minutes).

The teacher introduces general clothes names in English (dress, sweater, jacket, shirt, pants, pajamas, gloves, skirt, saree from Nepal, daura suruwal from Nepal, shalwar kameez from India, kimono from Japan, kilts from Scotland, gho from Bhutan) vocabulary of colors and shapes is pre-taught in previous lessons and this would be just a review.

4. Vocabulary memorization game, keyword game (10 minutes).

The teacher confirms the list of vocabulary (up to 8 recently introduced) in one round. A keyword is decided and written on the blackboard. Students get into pairs and place an eraser in between. The teacher says at random the previously confirmed words. If it is not the keyword, students repeat, and after, everyone claps twice in rhythmic order. In the case of keyword, students do not have to repeat or clap but quickly take the eraser. Whoever takes the eraser the fastest is the winner. Change the keyword and repeat round two. (Teacher can change not only the keyword but also the speed

or tempo). However, students are encouraged to repeat the work clearly and carefully.

Option: Instead of an eraser game played by a pair, students can “stand up” or “sit down.”

5. **A hands-on activity using a worksheet** (10 minutes).

The students will be designing a t-shirt for their friend. This part of the lesson is for speaking as well as writing practice. Students will be interviewing their friends with the help of the worksheet. The teacher shows the design of a t-shirt, which was drawn in advance by the teacher. Explain the phrases to be used during the interview. Students get into pairs and ask their partners what colour and shapes they like and make a note of the answers. After one student finishes writing the letters, they switch, and the other student interviews the first student. The interview questions consist of what colour they like? What shapes, designs, alphabet or words (according to their level they will interact in this part) and answer what they like on their t-shirt. (Make a rule that the instruction should be simple. Students cannot make impossible demands, such as, I like 100 gold stars. Set the limit appropriate to their level. The student, after making a note of what their friend likes on their T-shirt, starts drawing for each other. If the time permits, it is best to change their seating arrangement while drawing designs and colouring the

T-shirt for their friend, as children like surprises.

6. **Exchange the T-shirt and wrap up** (5 minutes).

The students will now exchange the T-shirts they have drawn in their worksheet for their friend. While exchanging, they are encouraged to praise their friends and thank each other. The teacher then wraps up praising children about their attitude and use of English.

References

- Bader, B. (1976). *American Picturebooks from Noah's Ark to The Beast Within*. New York: Macmillan.
- Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Mourao, S. (2016). Picturebooks in the primary EFL classroom: Authentic literature for an authentic response. *CLELE Journal*,4(1), 25-43

LET'S DESIGN A TSHIRT

Name: _____

Grade: _____

Student A: What colors do you like?

Student B: I like _____.

Student A: What shapes do you like?

Student B: I like _____.

Student A: This T-shirt is for you.

Student B: So nice/ so cool/ it's beautiful. Thank you.

Contributor: Ms. Samikshya Bidari is from Nepal, currently pursuing an MA in TESOL at Soka University, Tokyo/Japan. Before enrolling as a student she has experience of teaching at various public schools in Tokyo. With a prior TEFL certification and MBA degree from Bangalore University in India, her current research interest is in the field of sociolinguistics, teaching young learners, art of picture books, storytelling and culture in EFL classroom.

