

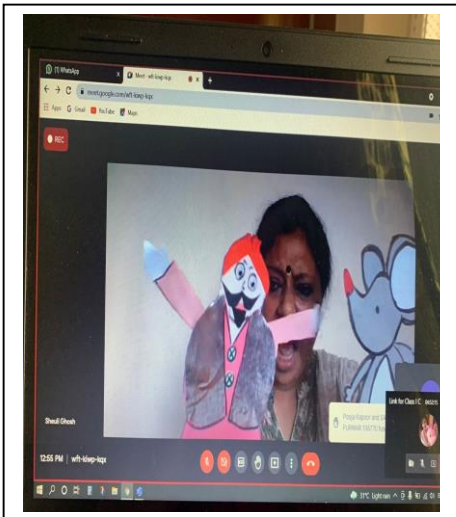
STORY TELLING AS A PEDAGOGY

Staying positively engaged in this Corona and Omicron time is extremely tough for everyone, especially for the tiny tots. But there are always ways to walk on new paths, despite challenges. “Where there is a will, there is a way. “And we nailed it. Right?

Sometimes I really wonder how this Pandemic has changed our lives, especially the teachers and the students. I, jittery for the initial two-three days, was kind of forced to adapt to the new normal but today I feel so elated that I have become techno-savvy, taking online sessions, online webinars, online activities, making PPTs and videos, converting almost everything possible into an online track. Here I would like to give all the credit to my seniors who at every step guided and encouraged us. And lo and behold we students, educators, and the parents soared up high with flying colours. Kudos to all the teaching-learning fraternity.

To keep children motivated and excited about learning, we the facilitators always put in time and energy and come up with new ideas. I am a proud Pre School teacher at Bal Bharati Public School, Noida, and believe strongly in building a strong foundation at the early years. From the past one and a half or two years, we have all been able to successfully sail through the online sessions.

I simply love to greet each child with a genuine smile, saying Namaskaar to develop the connection in an online platform too. It’s so nice that I meet and greet all the parents and grandparents too and they also kind of go down the memory lanes through the class of their next generation. (Which would have not been possible otherwise)



We all know that the foundational years are the most crucial period of brain development in children. The National Education Policy 2020, aims at creating holistic and well-rounded personalities, equipped with key 21st-century skills such as Critical Thinking, Communication, Creativity, Collaboration, and Compassion.

As a facilitator, I talk to the young learners, to check on how they are feeling. And there is where I feel my role as a storyteller emerges. Stories are the most innate and important form of communication. We all love to tell stories. (Even the parental tips and advice) If the child is not eating, I tell a story, If the child is not listening, I have another story. And it always works beautifully for all children. The story of our day, the story of our

friends, and so on. I think stories are the most powerful and effective way to deliver a message. Stories simply have the power to turn any situation for the better. It gives the learner new perceptions of the world around them.

Telling a story is an amazing way to introduce a new topic. I generally use it as an icebreaker. I have seen that it helps the children to relate to a topic and get them interested in it even before taking it up formally in the class. It inspires purposeful talking, and I play many games related to the story to develop motor capacities. I have found that it increases the enthusiasm for reading and improves listening skills.

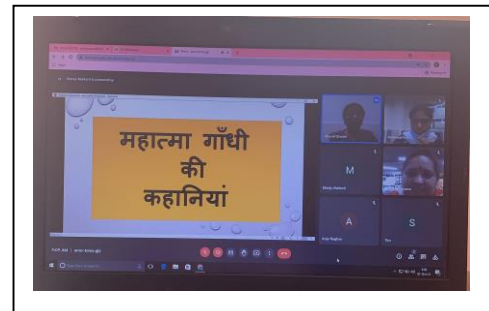
Another idea for introducing a new topic using storytelling is to engage students with role-playing or drama. I take the topic and turn it into a script where students act it out which is a lot of fun and a lot of learning at the same time. The budding artists feel extremely proud to use the things or dresses which they have in their wardrobe to showcase their latent talent. To lay emphasis on making learning joyful and interesting for the learners so that they move away from rote learning, I also like giving twist to a tale. For this, I ask them to combine any two of their favourite stories to form a meaningful new story. This helps the child to think critically and develop reasoning skills.

If the child is low on confidence in certain areas, instead of just asking them to open up in front of the class and express freely, I narrate stories of inspiring people. It also helps shy children gain confidence in new surroundings and enhance their social and emotional skills.

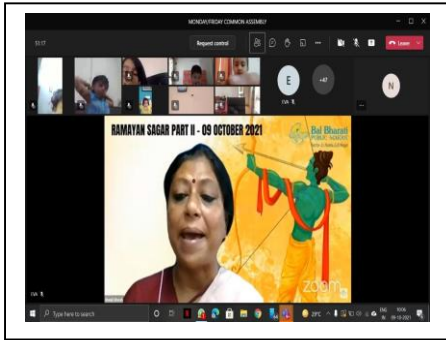
Once someone asked Albert Einstein 'How can I make children intelligent' he answered, 'If you want your children to be intelligent, read them stories.' The person asked again 'If you want to make them more intelligent, then?' Einstein answered 'If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more stories.'

Believe you me, teaching through storytelling has the magic to bring a boring subject to life. Be it alphabet or numbers, value education or science or any other subject, it can make it more exciting and possibly engage students to be more attentive during the class. I have been using Storytelling as a powerful tool that can turn any lesson into an adventure trip. And to tell you all that when I make my own stories to teach a concept, it's my real growth that takes place. During Gandhi Jayanti, I took a story session on Gandhiji's life which generated so much information about the Father of the Nation, and to my amazement, they were asking me questions and were curious to know more about many more incidents of Bapu's life.

Similarly, last month, to generate awareness about Sustainable Development Goals many self-made stories were narrated to make them understand Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. Later when a quiz was conducted the young brigade was able to answer all questions correctly. The same strategy was used to collaborate with our partner school of Sikkim state, wherein we narrated a folk tale from Uttar Pradesh and on the other side, they narrated a Sikkimese folk tale, which I think is a great way to increase compassion and empathy along with cultural exchange.



To me, storytelling is more than just telling a story, it triggers the emotions of children. It can make them laugh, smile, cry, happy, sad, or even angry. It helps to remember things as well as connect with others. Here I would like to add that it's not only the teachers but the children who come up with lovely, unique stories be it fantasy world stories or stories based on the alphabet.



This year, on Dussehra our School decided to present Ramlila in a Puppetry form, to make history come alive. So, storytelling with puppets has been a great factor in developing and achieving many goals effortlessly such as their critical thinking, imagination, and creativity to establish connections between the ideas and construct new knowledge.

I even use personal anecdotes in my classes. Stories build relationships between teachers and students. Telling a personal story creates a strong connection between me and my students.

This beautiful rapport and connection make everything reachable and possible. It has helped create an atmosphere where kids are more willing to share, not just their stories, but their views and insights. Storytelling is a powerful pedagogical tool that has developed my growth. As a facilitator, our responsibilities lie in the holistic development of children henceforth I always integrate it with Play. It makes learning fun, pleasurable, and a truly collaborative experience. Along with physical activities, freehand drawing, and colouring, singing, and dancing enhance the whole learning process. I vivaciously do activities with my group of shining stars to promote learning by doing as it ensures active engagement of learners along with better understanding of concepts. My part as a storyteller plays a vital role to motivate the children to inquire into new concepts by building upon their prior knowledge and experiences.

It's been three decades with these blooming buds, where I have been enjoying and cherishing each moment with pleasure.

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