

Maidwell Primary School

**THE
STORYTELLING
SCHOOL**



The power of storytelling

Pie Corbett



“Stories are magical. Every teacher knows that. You read or tell a story. Silence descends. Children stare at you, through you and into a world beyond and yet, inside of them. In this inner world, the story is recreated. Indeed, the telling can be so powerful that a story may make us laugh, feel afraid or even cry.”



Research has shown that children who are read to in the first four years of their lives are mostly like to succeed in education. This is because constant engagement with stories develops the ability to sit, listen and concentrate. It builds a child's imaginative world, littering the mind with characters, settings and possibilities. These are the building blocks that they will need when they come to create their own stories.

You cannot create out of nothing.



Stories also provide children with vocabulary, an elegant turn of phrase and the tune of well-written prose. This in turn reflects in the children's writing. A rich and deep story experience shapes and determines what sort of a writer the child becomes. Reading **creates** our written style.

Children who have been read to and who read avidly are the first to form abstract concepts across the curriculum. Imagination develops the ability to think abstractly.

So ... story helps to make you brainy!



Many children might struggle with reading but can retell a well-known story. Children's early language development is based on 'copying' the words, phrases and expressions they hear at home.

Small children pass through a phase where they want to have the same story again and again! Why do they want the pattern of a well-loved tale retold so many times that they know it word for word?

Perhaps the brain has a very real need for the narrative pattern to help us comprehend the world.



It is not so much the book that matters but the story.

In class, telling a story without the book means that you can directly engage with the children, drawing them into the tale, scanning around the classroom. This direct intimacy is a powerful strategy for ensuring that almost every child becomes rapidly involved in the story's spell.

Many teachers who start storytelling comment:

“The book gets in the way!”



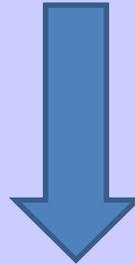
As Pie Corbett developed story telling work in classrooms, he realised that if a story was developed orally – as a precursor to writing – it made the actual act of writing easier. Some children shift from only writing a few lines to suddenly writing pages.

Why?

- If the composition is well developed the children are more motivated with their writing. **They have a story to tell.**
- The act of writing has been made easier. The flow of the sentences is already well-known after having retold and refined the story orally (much easier for a small child).



The story is developed



The child is motivated





The Facts

- Children who are read to regularly before coming to school are the most likely to have success
- Children who read for pleasure are also most likely to succeed – in Literacy but also across the curriculum – because of the way in which reading develops the ability to think in the abstract
- More articulate children come from homes that are rich in story and language





The Facts (continued)

- By the age of 4 children who have been filled with words and tales since birth can be more than 2 years ahead of children who have not had such language experiences
- It is impossible to write a sentence pattern without being able to say it ... and you cannot say it if you haven't heard it



Key Features of a Storytelling School



Hear

The teacher tells the story to the class



Map

Each child draws a simple map of the sequence of main events in the story



Step

Children develop their own way of 'stepping' the story, working out a sequence of freeze-frame gestures, words and sounds that summaries the main sequence of events in the story



Speak

Once the stepping is completed, children are ready to practise telling one another their story



Deepen



Shared Writing



Independent Writing



Storytelling School

IMITATION COPY

- Children write an initial sample – use to focus teaching
- Oral Learning of the text
- Draw
- Add actions
- Saying out loud
- Deepen

HEAR

MAP

STEP

SPEAK

INTERVIEWS/

CHARACTER PROFILE/

MIME/PHONE CALLS/

TELL AT HOME



Storytelling School continued

During this phase the children learn a story and develop it, deepening character, description, dialogue and drama while keeping the main elements basically the same. The story's setting, characters, dilemmas and resolutions remain similar, but the way they are conveyed is developed. During the **imitation** stage children learn the language patterns within a story.



INNOVATION



MODIFY



ADAPT

There are three ways to innovate:

1

Substitution:

Altering character, setting or objects

2

Addition:

Add new things, eg: speech, description, character

3

Plot recycling:

Changing everything except the plot



In the **Innovation** stage children learn to reapply the patterns in different ways. It is a stepping stone towards full invention where whole new stories are created.



Shared Writing

In shared writing new texts are created with the class. Children will have learned and developed a story in the **imitation** stage and will now contribute to creating a written version. In this way, they practise transforming their oral story ideas into written text.

Shared editing allows the children to work with the teacher to reflect and improve on the writing.



- Children can be ‘hugged closely’



- Children can transfer ideas and engage new features with greater independence



Invention – Create own text

- Assessment will be used to set clear targets with examples
- Invention means creating a new story without reference to a particular known story
- With invention, we start from scratch without a particular story in mind – creating a story about defeating a monster is invention
- Consciously or subconsciously we make up new stories from the ones we know already, splicing and matched pieces of them together in different ways





Message

If we want children to invent new stories, we have to fill them with lots of great stories first. Many of the skills that have been developed when learning imitation and innovation are also used in invention.

When we start changing parts of a known story, we learn to reflect on how changing one story element may affect others. We need these skills when inventing stories.



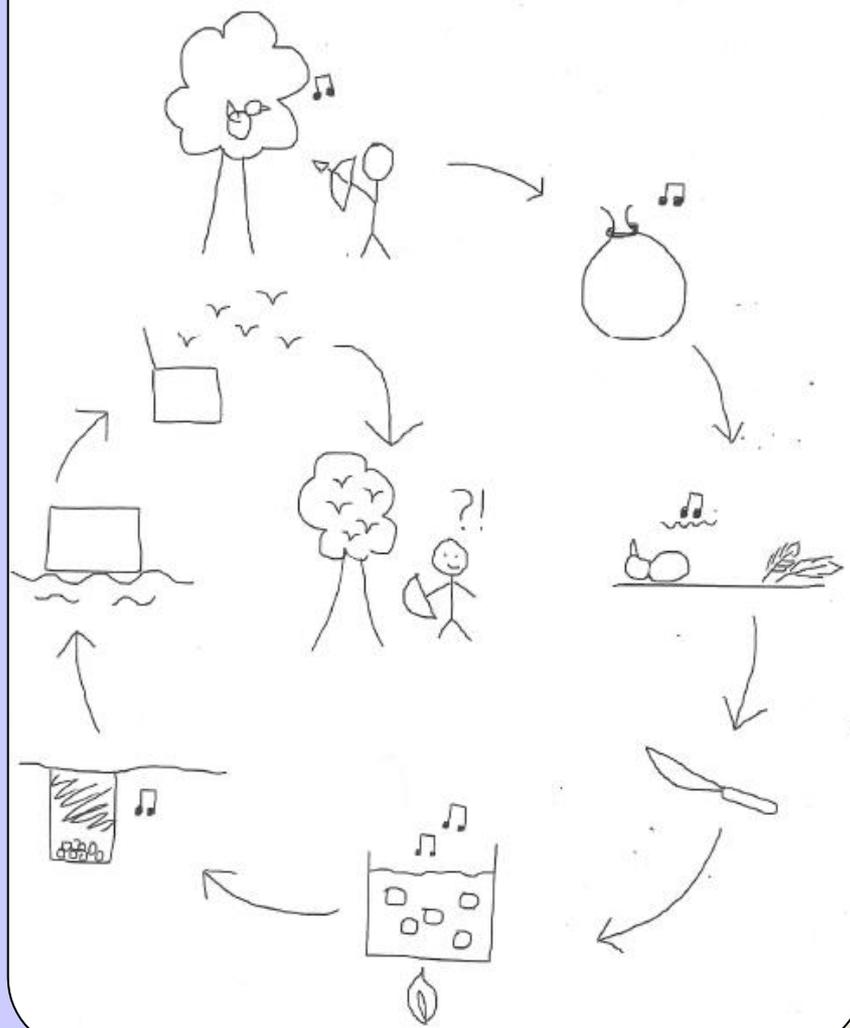
PLOT MATRIX

1 Where? Setting	2 Who? Character	3 What? problem/want/ need/dilemma
4 Obstacle(s)	5 Setbacks	6 Helper (or other new character
7 Solution Resolution of main problem	8 Ending How do we leave the story?	9 Learning Lessons, moral for characters, storyteller & audience

In order to teach something we need to demonstrate how to do it before asking children to have a go



The Freedom Song



Stepping The Freedom Song



1 shoot
Hunter shoots annoying bird



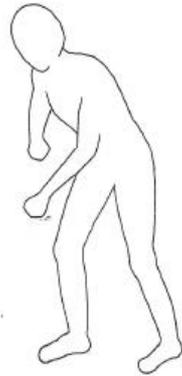
2 sack
Puts bird in the sack



3 pluck
He plucks the bird, but it
keeps singing



4 chop
He chops it up, but it
still sings



5 bury
He buries it, but it
still sings



6 throwing
He throws it into the river



7 wow
Fishermen open box



8 freedom
Hunter understands
the freedom bird



The Curriculum

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Narrative	Voyage & Return	Quest	Overcoming the Monster	Rags to Riches	Comedy	Tragedy & Rebirth
Non-fiction	Instruction	Recount	Explanation	Information	Discussion	Persuasion
Basic Characters	Heroes/ Heroines	Villains	Helpers/ Mentors	Tricksters	Guardians	Transformers/ Shape Shifters
Story Features	Setting	Character	Dilemma	Mood	Description	Speech
Curricular Link	Light & Dark	Romans	Plants & Animals	Space	Victorians	Mountains & Rivers



The Curriculum continued

Voyage & Return	Alice in Wonderland	Chronicles of Narnia	Goldilocks	The Hobbit
Quest	Three Billy Goats Gruff	Jack & the Beanstalk	Stone Soup	
Overcoming the Monster	Little Red Riding Hood (if she lives)	Three Little Pigs (if they live)	Hansel & Gretel	
Rags to Riches	Cinderella	Puss in Boots	Aladdin	Rumplestiltskin
Comedy	The Emperor's New Clothes	Lazy Jack		
Tragedy	Three Little Pigs (if they die)	Little Red Riding Hood (if she dies)	The Boy Who Cried Wolf	
Rebirth	Sleeping Beauty	The Ugly Duckling	Beauty & the Beast	Snow White



PARENTS

- Read to and with your child
- Listen to your child when they bring home their stories to tell
- Talk together!



