Science and its Narrative

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Many surveys have taken flight in garnering the most ill-favoured subjects by learners. In numerous lists, Science has always been present coming next to Mathematics, which was dubbed the number one enemy of learners. When everyone puts the blame on the subject per se, there must be a more careful investigation on the real culprit. Taking a closer look at the issue, studies expose the way of teaching as the primary source of the subject’s being infamous.

Bernardo, et al. 2008 delved into the students’ perception of Science classes in the Philippines. These trends were discussed in relation to possible problems related to teacher practices that may contribute to low student achievement levels in science (Bernardo, et. Al, 2008). Hence, what teachers must concern themselves is the method for which the subject is presented to eradicate its stigma.

One of its stereotypes is the overemphasis on memorization of concepts instead of conceptual understanding and establishing conceptual connections, among many other which dissipate the interest of the learners.

To discover new and unique ways to help teachers with their units and lesson plans, media specialists are always on the lookout. Practically speaking, storytelling afforded them the opportunity. Denning (2009) states that, “A narrative or story in its broadest sense is anything told or recounted; more narrowly, and more usually, something told or recounted in the form of a causally-linked set of events; account; tale;[sic] the telling of a happening or connected series of happenings, whether true or fictitious. In some cultures without a written language storytelling was the only way to convey a society’s culture, values, and history. Instructional tools have been used by great teachers and leaders in the forms of parables, legends, myths, fables, and real-life examples to convey
important instruction (Benedict, 1934; Brown & Duguid, 1998; Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Leonard-Barton, 1995). Science’s negative marks like the stress it lays on dull and unproductive memorization maybe diminished, or much better, eradicated.

Andrews, et al. (2010) expounded the four main storytelling instructional methods which are: 1) case-based instruction, 2) problem-based instruction, scenario-based instruction and narrative-based instruction. Cases are stories which transpired in the past and contextually used in classroom discussions. It posits a problem and solution scheme that may be of great contribution to dissemination of concepts in Science where the learner plays an active role as an investigator. On a lighter side, narrative-based instruction is more concerned with the emotional immersion of learners in the narrative and highlights the ‘entertainment’ side of the discussion over the instructional aspect. This will ease off the learning environment once in a while and will serve as a quick break for earners with the affective aspect given notice. On the other hand, scenario-based instruction positions learners in a place where they can interact with a situation which produces different consequences depending on their decision and actions. Scenarios are usually pulled out of history while some may be fictitious. Lastly, what sets problem-based instruction different from the three is that it requires learners to be in charge of their own learning. The learner’s task is to solve ill-structured problems that do not have optimal solution criteria or parameters. The task is usually done in a team setting that allows cooperative learning.

Hence, storytelling is not just caged in the idea of being used in a literature class. It may go further from the teaching of English to the teaching of Science and in almost all subjects. Not only that it piques students’ fleeting attention, but it integrates multiple skills in one sitting.
References:

