THE ROLE OF STORYTELLING IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION OF LEARNERS
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Storytelling, as defined, is one of the oldest artforms that stimulates imagination by narrating stories in live, without print or technology. It can be applied to a classroom setting wherein the teacher would tell stories that are related to their lesson in able to arouse the interests of the children in being engaged with the discussion. The art of storytelling can also be used as a strategy by the teacher in order for the students to effectively acquire and learn the language skills.

Teaching the English language and making the students fully understand and use it are two difficult tasks on the part of the teacher. However, with the use of storytelling, it makes the learning more enjoyable and interesting because children have innate fascination with stories. It can be an effective technique in expanding their vocabulary, basic knowledge about sentence structure, enhancing their oral language proficiency and gives them practice in order to advance with their language skills.

Karen Simpson (2016) said that stories form a crucial stage in their language development because children can unfold their reading and writing skills by understanding the language patterns of the stories that are being told by the teacher. She further added that “in teaching children the skills, they need to read the words but, crucially, building these skills on a language which foundation so that children want to read and write so that they can access and create worlds beyond their own experiences.”
However, the students cannot effectively develop their English language proficiency if the teacher would just merely tell stories to his/her students. Of course, students should have a direct involvement for them to acquire better learning. While telling a story, the teacher may ask series of questions to the students which may also serve as an icebreaker. By those questions, the students will answer and discuss his/her perspective, views and own understanding regarding what is being asked by the teacher. Hence, encouraging the students to explain develop their proficiency.

In addition, Katherin Massa (2008) said that letting the students do their own storytelling is also a good strategy wherein the students will work in pair – a student with high language skills and a student with a low language skills. With this collaboration, the student with high language skill will help his/her partner to be confident in using English language because he/she will be guided and will be more comfortable because it take a bit of the attention off him/herself. Massa also said that “this is meaningful for the lower leveled student because they are able to hear correct sentence structure in a safe environment made up of his/her peer.”

Telling or reading stories to students gives them an opportunity to be immersed in a rich language experience which can lead them to a better understanding in the use of English as a second language. Stories are great tools in improving retention and comprehension of language and by understanding the stories, the students can also develop their utilization of English language at the same time. Aside from that, their vocabulary will become broad as they encounter many terminologies which can be researchable if some of the meanings are unfamiliar.

It is indeed a challenge to think of different techniques and strategies when it comes to teaching English as the second language. Storytelling is one of the proven
techniques but the choice of the stories is also very important to consider. The teacher has to make sure that the stories are compelling and comprehensible based on the level or age of the students, and has to assure that the students can related with the content of the stories. Children love storytelling and it is their natural response to be interested in listening to and telling stories, and loving what you do is one of the best ways to learn.

References:

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