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Introduction

This resource pack is to help show using stories in the classroom can overall benefit students and teachers. One common task in literature classrooms is to teach students how to write authentically. In her article “Keeping it Real: Valuing Authenticity in the Writing Classroom,” Whitney writes “Use authentic language to describe genre. Students shouldn’t be writing ‘paper.’ They should be writing travel essays, book reviews, advice columns” (17). One way to help students to achieve authentic writing is to incorporate the use of stories into classrooms. Liz Prather, in her work *Story Matters*, writes “Narrative non-fiction asks students to take risks and learn how to compositionally zig and zag between information, argument, and story” (xvii). Additionally, Prather writes in her novel”

‘We are ‘storytelling animals’ says author Jonathon Gottschall (2012) in his book of the same title. In every known human culture, storytelling binds communities with gossip, warning and instruction. Gottschall writes, ‘It nourishes our imaginations; it reinforces moral behavior; it gives us safe words to practice inside. (Prather, 2)

Students are positively impacted by the use of stories in the classroom. They are able to grow by using stories to connect to themselves and their real-life experiences. By allowing students connect to different types of material to gather knowledge, students are able connect more to literature and writing itself. In other words, a way to promote authentic writing and help students achieve this type of writing, is to include stories into the curriculum. It is important to connect students with the class and the knowledge or information that teachers are trying to teach:

As people learn and read about the important issues of the day, they are asking questions, seeking out multiple perspectives, considering possibilities, and (at times) taking their investigations or inquiries further for better understanding and wider knowledge. (Wolk, 4)

Stories also show representation and other perspectives which helps readers understanding other people around them. In the book *Teaching Young Adult Literature Today*, the authors point out that literature offers students a chance to better understand the world around them, see other human experiences, and help them find their place in society (Hayn, Kaplan, and Clemmons, 103). Additionally, “providing an opportunity for a book to serve as a mirror provides a sense of acceptance” (Hayn, Kaplan, and Clemmons, 104). During these important years of discovering self-identity, it is important to show students not only a perspective of themselves, but also a perspective of those around them. This can help students feel safer in classrooms and more ready to learn.

Annotated Bibliography

Prather, Liz. *Story Matters*. Portsmouth, NH, Heinemann, 2019.

Liz Prather strongly defends the idea that stories should be used in classrooms. She defends her opinion by focusing on the notion that humans are storytelling creatures. Prather quotes Jonathon Gottschall to show that throughout history, everything humans have learned come from stories (which plants are poisonous, how to cook, etc.) (Prather, 2). Prather continues to show the importance of stories in the classroom by giving details and activities on how to incorporate the following into the classroom: ideas, characters, tension, structure, details, and language. Prather also gives details on different activities that would benefit instructors and students. An example of this would be a Universal Timeline, which builds students awareness to their own experiences and historical events (Prather, 30-32).

McNett, Gabriel. "Using Stories to Facilitate Learning." *College Teaching*, vol. 64, no. 4 (2016), 184-193.

Gabriel McNett starts his article off by pointing out that stories have been used to facilitate learning and communication among society. He continues to state that stories have such an affect in the classroom because humans naturally interpret our experiences as stories (McNett, 185). Since humans already interpret their experiences as stories (and are storytelling creatures), adding stories into a classroom will help connect students to the material (McNett, 185). McNett argues that just experiencing stories can engage the brain – in other words, stories can engage students and entertain them, which allows them to connect deeper to the teachings (McNett, 185). He writes that stories will help throughout the classroom by connecting students to the material, the teacher, and each other.

Friday, Matthew James. "Why Storytelling in the Classroom Matters." *Edutopia*, 11 July 2014.

Friday begins his article by stating that humans are hard-wired to learn through terms of beginning, middle, and end – similar to a story. This is how we understand the world – through stories. Similarly, Friday points out that storytelling is the oldest form of communication and teaching (Friday). Through these stories, we are able to communicate with each other and the world around us. Friday deeply focuses on the idea that stories are how we learn and are shaped. He ends his article with pointing out the benefits of using stories in classrooms: initiates writing, helps community, improves listening, and engages students (Friday).

Baxstrom, Emily. "Storytelling in Classroom." *Ohio University*, 1 November 2016.

Emily Baxstrom stresses the importance to develop a relationship between teachers and students; one way that this is possible is by using stories in the classroom. Braxstrom continues by pointing out that, with the use of storytelling, teachers are able to learn more about their students, especially during this trying time of students discovering their self-identity. To prove her argument, Braxstrom interviews teachers from different schools to show how stories have played an important part in their classrooms. One takeaway is that since it is human nature to communicate experiences, storytelling allows students to connect not only to the material, but also allow them to express their stories as well. In addition, using stories in a classroom can help increase students' empathy, sense of connection, and trust (Baxstrom).

Lewis, David, Dennis Rodgers, and Michael Woolcock. "The Fiction of Development: Literary Representation as a Source of Authoritative Knowledge." *The Journal of Development Studies*, vol. 44, no. 2: 198-216.

Through the article, David Lewis, Dennis Rodger, and Michael Woolcock focus on the idea that fiction is a strong source for knowledge and developing a society. The authors explain to readers that stories have been known to generally be a source of knowledge for individuals. They continue on this notion of fiction by arguing that fiction has a greater chance to spread information and acknowledge as fiction reaches a wider audience than academic literature does. One of the reasons that fiction is able to reach a wider audience is that fiction does not have the same restrictions that academic literature has; in other words, academic literature must abide by certain guidelines where fiction does not (Lewis, Rodgers, and Woolcock). Fiction allows readers to learn more about and be engaged in a certain topic without having to read academic literature, which would not be customized to fit their interest (Lewis, Rodgers, and Woolcock). Lewis, Roger, and Woolcock argue that fiction is a great way to not only spread knowledge, but to engage readers.

Brogden, Elizabeth. "When Fiction Feels Real: Representation and the Reading Mind by Elaine Auyoung (review)." *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 52., no. 2 (2020), 215-217.

In this article, Elizabeth Brogden reviews the novel *When Fiction Feels Real: Representation and the Reading Mind* written by Elaine Auyoung. In this article, Brogden examines how Auyoung analyzes how readers connect with fictional characters and therefore, connect with the novel. Additionally, Brogden focuses on how Auyoung points out how readers connect to characters (and stories) when they see the character(s) develop into a well-rounded character(s) (Brogden, 215). Throughout her novel, Auyoung asserts that readers connect to fiction since connecting with our humanness will make us better readers. In other words, we connect to fiction because fiction connects to our familiar senses (smell, taste, sight, etc.) (Brogden, 216). This connection to fiction helps students learn as they are more engaged to the material through the characters and the plotline.

Teaching Resources

Hernandez, Michael. "Guiding Students to Use Storytelling Across the Curriculum." *Edutopia*, 6 February 2024.

Michael Hernandez's article "Guiding Students to Use Storytelling Across the Curriculum" focuses on different ways instructors can incorporate storytelling into their classrooms. Hernandez starts his article off by informing readers that our relationships to stories says a lot about who we are as individuals (Hernandez). He stresses the importance for teachers to help students discover their relationship with stories and why they chose certain stories. In addition to question why students read certain stories, teachers should also be asking students to think about the authors of said stories – why the author chose certain characters or characteristics, what is their motivation for the story, how are these stories presented to readers? One way for students to achieve these reflections are discussing with classmates.

Hernandez points out that he challenges his students with themes. In order to help students, Hernandez lists many activities for instructors to incorporate in their classroom: dream journals, safaris, salons, and writing explorations (Hernandez).

“6 Strategies for Teaching Story Structure in Your Classroom.” *Waterford*, 19 December 2018.

This article on Waterford introduces six strategies for instructors to incorporate stories into their classrooms. The six strategies mentioned are: (1) teach story structure to all ages, (2) create a storyboard, (3) use the “SWBST” (Somebody Wanted But So Then) Strategy, (4) build out story maps, (5) teach story elements with a “pick a card,” (6) plot the story structure using a graph (“6 Strategies for Teaching Story Structure”). Each of these suggestions gives details and examples on the importance of each strategy and how teachers can incorporate them into their classrooms.

“30 Storytelling Tips for Educators: How to Capture Your Student’s Attention.” *Open Colleges*, 21 November 2012.

The article “30 Storytelling Tips for Educators: How to Capture Your Student’s Attention” provides tips for instructors to incorporate stories into their classroom and they can capture their student’s attention. A few examples of the tips provided in this article are: maintain eye contact, invite interaction, set the scene, draw real life connections, and create a timeline (“30 Storytelling Tips for Educators...”). Besides providing tips to capture student’s attention, this article also provides examples of how to improve storytelling. It shows that there is importance of not only using storytelling to facilitate learning, but also using storytelling to help improve writing.

Hayn, Judith A., Jeffrey S. Kaplan, and Karina R. Clemmons. *Teaching Young Adult Literature Today*. London, United Kingdom, Rowman & Littlefield, 2017.

In the book *Teaching Young Adult Literature Today*, the authors (Hayn, Kaplan, and Clemmons) focuses on the importance of teaching young adult literature and the impact it has on students. The authors write “Literature reflects out lives and our place in society, but it can also make us painfully aware if reality” (Hayn, Kaplan, and Clemmons, 103). Throughout the book, the authors not only point out why stories in the classroom matter, but also provide teachers ways to bring them into their classrooms. One suggestion the authors provide is to allow students to have some say in the material they read; having a role in the direction the students take allows them to connect more to the material (Hatn, Kaplan, and Clemmons, 177-178).

Works Cited

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