

Storytelling from a Point of View

Many stories are generated by the drama stories drawn from the original sources: stories only suggested by or first hidden in the shadows of the original, stories that evolved as the drama took shape, stories told about the story or the storyteller, stories reflecting and distancing the whole drama experience, and stories from the lives of the students, evoked by the drama. Drama offers us countless characters and situations for narrating the different stories both during and at the close of the drama event.

The storytelling roles that are chosen by the students (or by the teacher) often determine the impact of the storying. They can alter the direction of the drama, increase the tension, deepen the understanding of what has happened, explain a character's motivation, present a conflicting viewpoint, or summarize the drama experience.

Retelling the story from the viewpoint of one of the characters can deepen the drama that has been constructed. Consider the possibilities for storytelling when a student or a teacher adopts one of these roles:

- Reporter: *Here is what I have chosen to tell about.*
- Witness: *I was there and I saw it all.*
- Neighbor: *My neighbor told me all about what happened.*
- Friend: *I need to tell you what happened to my friend.*
- Gossip: *You won't believe what I just heard.*
- Commentator: *This is the news! Today, this story is just in.*
- Leader: *Listen, my people! You must understand what I will tell you.*
- Rebel: *Don't believe a word of this story!*
- Judge: *I seek to uphold the law.*
- Parent: *When I was a child, this story was so important to me.*
- Therapist: *Your problems will be revealed in this story I will tell you.*
- Police officer: *Here is what happened, your honor.*
- Government bureaucrat: *This story is the official word of the government.*
- Social worker: *We must do something about the people in this story.*
- Conscience: *What fills my mind as I tell the story?*
- Alien: *How amusing. This story would not happen in my world.*
- Spokesperson: *I will tell you this story so that we know how to proceed.*
- Patient: *After I tell this story, you will know what happened to me.*
- Inmate: *I tell this story to fill my jail with sunshine even for a moment.*
- Family member: *This story has been passed down in our family.*
- Traitor: *This is not exactly how it happened. Let me tell you.*
- Seer: *I will tell you a story and it will come true.*
- Spirit: *I want to tell you the story. Can you see or hear me?*

- Coach: *Let me help you tell the story.*
- The chosen one: *Only I can relate what has befallen all of us.*
- Robot: *I have recorded what has happened and I will play it back.*
- Artist: *I will transform the event according to my own needs.*

Instruments for Storytelling

We want our students to tell stories, to shape their own life anecdotes, to retell those we have shared in our drama, to add narratives to the improvised work they are creating together, to see storytelling as an important and valuable means of representing both experience and ideas. Something powerful happens when we tell stories in role: we can use the context of the drama event to uncover and unleash our own storying possibilities. As we draw upon the roles that we inhabit, we find ourselves, both students and teachers, able to participate in the art form called storytelling with added emotional power. We can change the syntax, the style, the voice, the mannerisms to fit the role, and the narrative lifts the drama work, giving it a texture that engages the listener-participants and the storyteller. We need to use this powerful instrument more often in our drama making—everyone in the imaginary garden has a story to tell and a right to be heard.