

# **Incorporating and Soliciting Personal Experience in Adult Education**

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# Objectives

- Break down the elements of story-telling
- Review relevance to education and educational techniques
- Educator discussion to expand on the story-telling principals

# Storytelling

- Before written language, an essential element of most cultures
- Communicated legends, accomplishments, and religion
- Explained common phenomenon
- Promoted identity, unity, and social cohesiveness

# Definitions

Tragedy is the imitation of an action... in a dramatic rather than narrative form; with incidents arousing pity and fear...

Comedy is often defined in a similar manner, but with light language, satire, and a happy ending

# Elements of drama

## Aristotle's Six Elements of Drama

1. Plot: Events that happen vs. meaning;
2. Theme: Meaning vs. events; insight or generalization about life;
3. Character: Personality & attributes of main persons in story;
4. Language/Dialogue: Words written & spoken;
5. Music/Rhythm: Sound, rhythm & melody of the spoken words;
6. Spectacle: Visual elements including scenery, costumes, & special effects.

# Basic structure of drama (& stories)

- Stasis (status quo)
- Protagonist
  - Sympathetic to audience
  - Motivation
  - Fatal flaw (cause of potential downfall)
- Antagonist and/or Conflict (desire versus obstacle)
  - vs. self
  - vs. others
  - vs. society
  - vs. fate, universe or God
- Characters and character development
- Change (growth) of protagonist
- Catharsis (emotional release) for audience

# Example

Audience: Story you use in training?

- Tragedy or comedy?
- ID components from previous slide?
- What is motivation for telling story?

# Example (continued)

- What is the theme?
- What is the ‘moral’?
- What is useful (in the education context) about this story?
- What is not useful?

# Engaging audience: Plot lines

- *Open conflict*: Struggle in which the protagonist fights against all odds but is not doomed.
- *Dramatic thesis*: Indications thru hints or symbolism that conditions the audience to expect certain plot developments.
- *Coincidence*: Sudden reversal of fortune that portrays ironies or misunderstandings.
- *Dramatic irony*: The culmination of a plan, action, or expectation in a surprising way.

# Connection to selected principles of education\*

- Stories, metaphor, and myth: Stories allow the listener to seek a life experience & find clues to answers within themselves.
- 1<sup>st</sup> person experience; Bridge the gap between listener's own life and the content under study.
- Case studies: A factual account that is objective and helps the listener develop an ability to articulate thoughts, frame problems, generate solutions, and evolve principles that may apply to other situations.

\*Adapted from *A brief summary of best practices in teaching*, compiled by Tom Drummond, North Seattle Community College  
[www.northonline.sccd.ctc.edu/eceprog/bstprac.htm](http://www.northonline.sccd.ctc.edu/eceprog/bstprac.htm)

# What do we want in stories used for S&H education?

- Engage audience
- Relate subject matter to actual experience
- Change rhythm of presentation
- Humor or drama
- Reinforcement of subject
- Highlight risk of certain behaviors
- Imagination
- Visualization

# Want (cont)

- Development of critical thinking
  - Ask questions
  - Elicit alternatives
- Transition to next topic
- Which of the students do you watch to see if your message got thru?

# What can be counterproductive?

- Politics
- Religion
- Culturally restricted
- Insults (& stereotypes?)
- Unauthorized disclosure
- Too lengthy

# Other considerations

- Point of view
  - 1<sup>st</sup> person
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> person
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> person

# Summary

- Stories can be a key element of education
- Consider structure and layers of stories
- Relevance of theme
- Message behind the moral