

# **‘Storytelling is teaching’: the value of narratives**

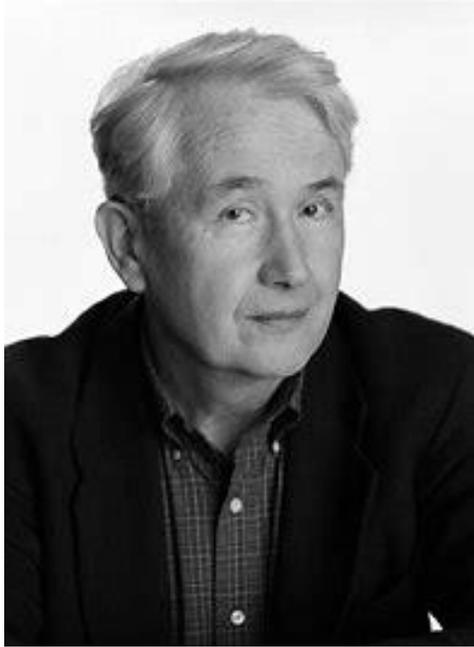
Scott Thornbury



Once upon a time there was a farmer who dug up a big earthenware jar in his field.



How does the story continue?



I argue with myself, You're telling stories and you're supposed to be teaching .

-- I am teaching. Storytelling is teaching.

-- Storytelling is a waste of time .

-- I can't help it. I'm not good at lecturing .

-- You're a fraud. You're cheating our children.

-- They don't seem to think so.

-- The poor kids don't know.

I'm a teacher in an American school telling stories of my school days in Ireland. It's a routine that softens them up in the unlikely event I might teach them something solid from the curriculum.

(Frank McCourt: *Teacher Man*.)

## My eight favourite story activities:

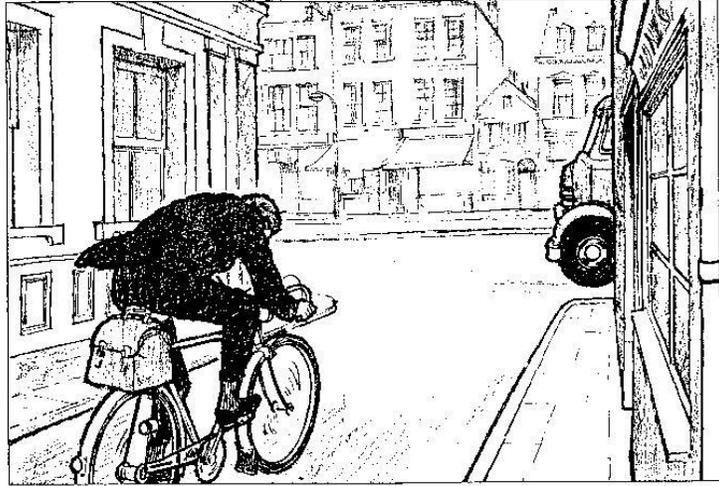
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2. slow reveal (two elephants)
3. dictogloss (Riga tiger)
4. jigsaw stories (accident)
5. true or false (travel stories)
6. guess the story (NY subway)
7. jumbled stories (the mouse dog)
8. paper interview (Russia)

There was a young woman of Riga  
Who went for a ride on a tiger.  
They returned from the ride  
With the woman inside  
And a smile on the face of the tiger.

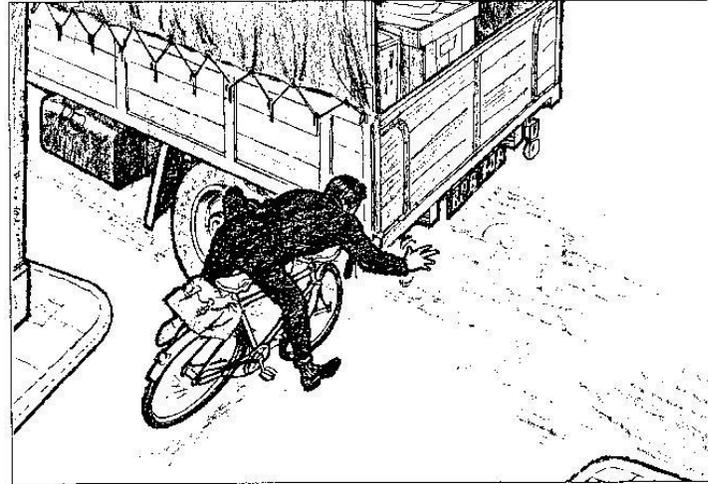
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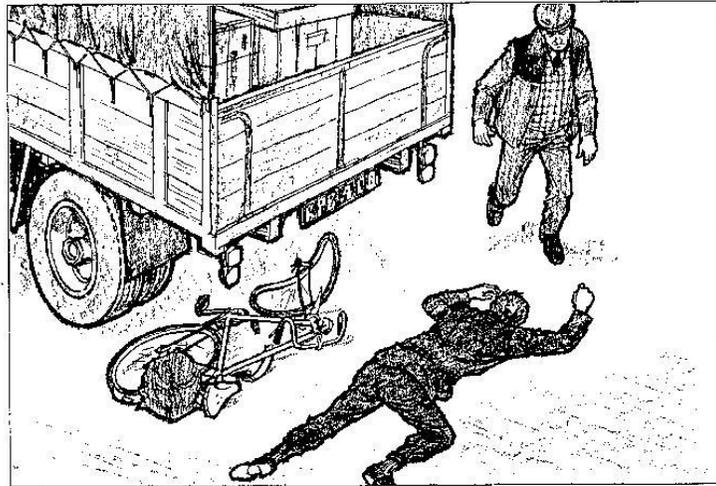
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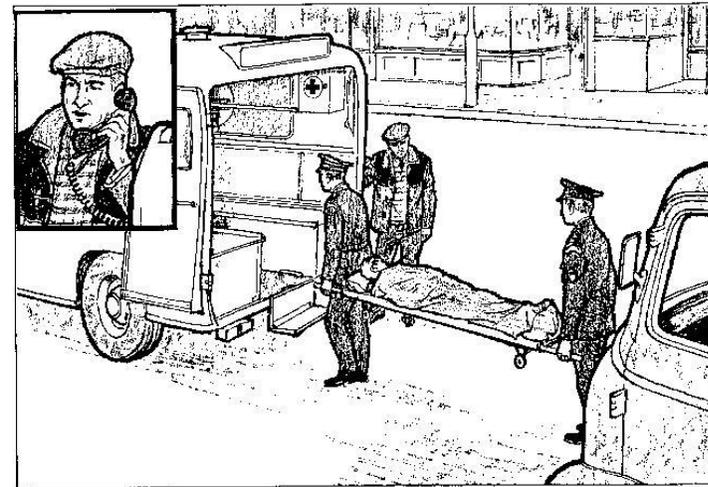
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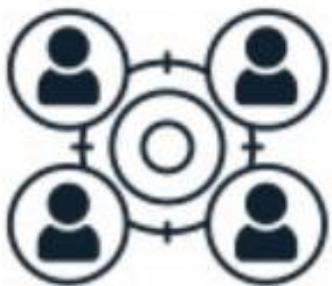
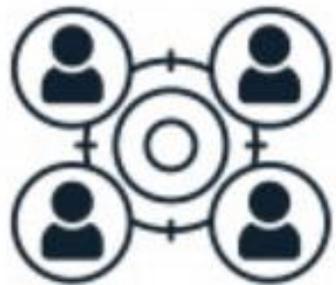


D



Byrne, D. (1967) *Progressive Picture Compositions*. Longman.



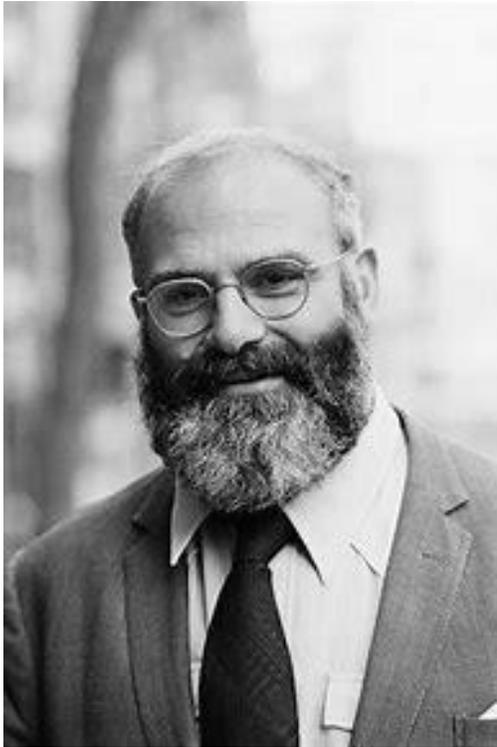


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"If we wish to know about a [person], we ask 'What is [their] story – [their] real, inmost story?' – for each of us is a biography, a story. Each of us is a singular narrative, which is constructed, continually, unconsciously, by, through, and in us – through our perceptions, our feelings, our thoughts, our actions; and, not least, our discourse, our spoken narrations. Biologically, physiologically, we are not so different from each other; historically – as narratives – we are each of us unique."

Oliver Sacks (1985) *The man who mistook his wife for a hat and other clinical tales*.

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Once upon a time, in the Kingdom of Dogs, there was a king. There's this man, and he goes into a bar with his dog. He was a big black dog, with a white stripe on his forehead. The barman says: You can't bring a dog in here. He was walking in the forest one day when he met a man. The man had a mouse. The dog had never seen a mouse before. So he says, I am blind and this is my guide dog. He said to the man, What manner of dog is this? The barman says, Ok, that's all right then. And the man said, it is a Mouse Dog, the rarest and smallest dog in the world. And so the man goes and sits down with his dog and enjoys a drink. The dog king was enchanted by this small dog. I must have this dog, he thought. Then another man comes into the bar. He also has a dog, a very small dog, a Chihuahua, in fact. It is hardly bigger than a mouse. So he said to the man, let me have your dog. And the first man calls him over, and says to him, Dogs aren't allowed in here. And the man said, On one condition. What is that? the dog asked. But if you tell the barman you are blind and that your dog is a guide dog, he will let you in. So the man goes to the bar with his dog. 'You must make the Mouse Dog your queen' You can't bring that dog in here, says the barman. Very well, said the dog king. But I am blind, and this is my guide dog, says the man. And he took the mouse back to his palace and made her his queen. Wait a minute, says the barman. Chihuahuas don't make guide dogs. And that is why, to this day, dogs don't chase mice. They gave me a Chihuahua? says the man, quick as a flash.

Once upon a time, in the Kingdom of Dogs, there was a king. He was a big black dog, with a white stripe on his forehead. He was walking in the forest one day when he met a man. The man had a mouse. The dog had never seen a mouse before. He said to the man, 'What manner of dog is this?' And the man said, 'It is a Mouse Dog, the rarest and smallest dog in the world.' The dog king was enchanted by this small dog. I must have this dog, he thought. So he said to the man, 'Let me have your dog.' And the man said, 'On one condition.' 'What is that?' the dog asked. 'You must make the Mouse Dog your queen.' 'Very well,' said the dog king. And he took the mouse back to his palace and made her his queen. And that is why, to this day, dogs don't chase mice.

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And that is why, to this very day, dogs chase rabbits.

And that is why, to this very day, wolves howl at the moon.

And that is why, to this very day, bulls.....

And that is why, to this very day, ....

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## Scott's trip to Russia.

As we know, Scott came to Russia not long time ago. In this short time he visited

Moscow and Yaroslavl. In Moscow he visited Red square, the kremlin, Gorky park and the exhibition of modern art and photography.

He liked many things in Yaroslavl, for example old churches and monestry. He also liked

Russia food: Borsch, stroganoff and blini's.

He would like to visit Saint Peterburg and

Ekatarinberg.

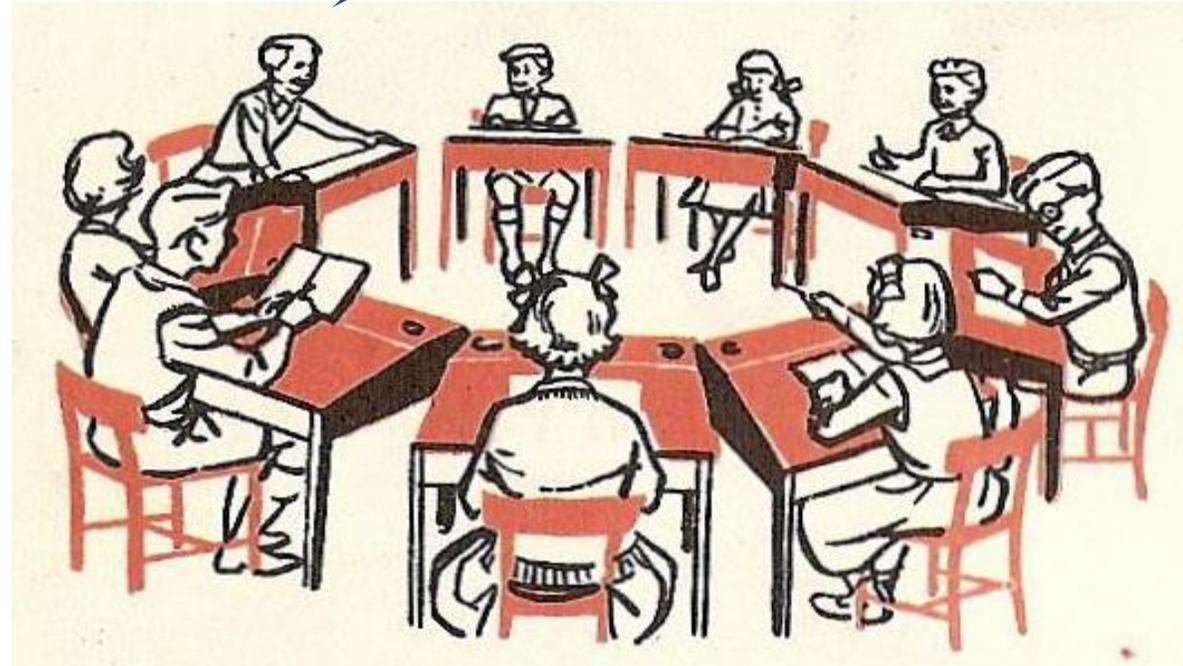
more common -

I enjoy more when a teacher sits down in front of us and explains a real thing that happened to him/her and then he asks us for similar situations that we can have gone through.

Actually, I think that playing roles and people involved in movies didn't work very well today, at least in the area I was in. Perhaps it was our fault, we didn't contribute all that well and

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**Thanks!**



[www.scottthornbury.com](http://www.scottthornbury.com)