

**India's National Education Policy** (2020), page 3 –

"There will be a growing demand for humanities and the arts as India moves towards becoming a developed country and one of the three largest economies in the world.

Education thus must move towards being **less content-centred, and more towards enabling students to think critically** and solve problems, to be creative and multidisciplinary, and to innovate, adapt, and absorb new material in novel and changing fields.

Pedagogy must evolve to make education more experiential, holistic, integrated, **inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centred, discussion-based**, flexible, and, of course, enjoyable.

In all stages, experiential learning will be adopted, including hands-on learning, **arts-integrated education, with story-telling-based pedagogy, among others, as standard pedagogy within each subject**, and with explorations of relations among different subjects".

**CBSE's training theme (1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025): "Learning through Art Integration"** .

**CBSE Conference: "Learning through Art Integration", Madurai, 17 and 18 Oct 2024.**

**Talk in Conference : "Storytelling and Drama as Pedagogy", Dr Eric Miller, 18 Oct 2024 – [Notes below](#).**

Art Integration is a transformative pedagogy.

Art Integration nurtures creativity, encouraging students to explore innovative ideas, express themselves, and think outside the box. Incorporating arts into education supports the holistic development of students, addressing their emotional and social needs, as well as their cognitive needs.

### **Storytelling and Drama as Pedagogy** (Along with **Oracy – Learning by Speaking and Moving**)

#### **Functions of Story and Drama**

#### **Methods of Story-making**

#### **Enacting Situations**

Examples of **Ways Stories Can Be Used To Teach Lessons**, and **Actual Stories That Can Be Used To Teach Lessons**

#### **Suggestions for Principals**

### **Oracy – Learning by Speaking and Moving**

Becoming a brilliant **conversationalist**.

Composing and giving **speeches (research, descriptive, and persuasive)**.

**Debating**.

**Telling a story**, and **leading a discussion** about the story.

**Project Reports**.

**Job Interviews**.

Experiential Learning. Hands-on learning. Active learning. **Learning through Speaking and Moving**.

Get the students activated. The Age of Lecturing to students is over. Now the lecture can be to introduce a topic and the way the topic is going to be explored through activities.

**Think, Pair, Share.** Additional info about **Oracy** is [here](#).

### **Functions of Story and Drama**

Two parts of storytelling: story and telling. Telling primarily means, using the voice and body in a social gathering. Instantaneous feedback. Story can be presented through numerous mediums. All of the arts often use story.

When the term, "Integrating Arts", is used I am thinking this refers to all of the arts. Thus, when drawings or paintings are referred to, the term "visual art" might be used. And when sculptures and dioramas are referred to, the term, "three-dimensional art", might be used.

Emotional and Physical involvement. Physically Act Things Out.

Give a sense of reality. Absorb and digest it. Make it more real, tangible.

Where one's emotions and body go, the mind follows. Thoughtful.

Get involved. Engage with the material. Enact, Embody, Role play, Improvise, Pretend, Imagine, Interact, Move.

When one says something to a group, one has to take responsibility for the material. One has to own it.

Storytelling and Drama – as much as possible, by the students. Seeking to get away from the student as audience member. The pressure of preparing to give a presentation, a performance, is a great motivator.

A story is a package of information that has meaning. The meaning can be contested. Easy to store and access (recall). Contains value judgements about behaviours, and/or invites discussions about same.

A function of story and drama is to put ideas, emotions, and ideals, into play. Where the emotions and the body goes, the thinking mind follows.

Then participants can take this material "to heart", and experience it through their imaginations, their emotions, and (in the case of drama) their bodies. Then the rational mind can think about these ideas through "critical thinking".

Thinking critically is not – critical doesn't mean negative. It means looking at a situation from all different sides, from all possible angles. What are the traditions? What are the experts? What is your opinion? What is my opinion? Seeking to look at things objectively. There is no last word in critical thinking. It's an ongoing process of gathering evidence to answer a question.

If they hear tell or hear a story – they think about it, they will internalize it, and they will remember it. That's the hope.

Imagine, Identify, Project, Empathise, Imitate.

Regardless of whether a story's characters are humans, animals, divinities, etc -- all stories are about situations. Story listeners can **Project** themselves into, and **Imagine** themselves in these situations. They can **Empathise** and **Identify** with -- and even may possibly eventually **Imitate** -- the characters.

In situations, characters have to make choices regarding what to do. What choices do you want the students to consider? Considering if they might do things the same or differently from how the characters do things, gives the listeners practice for living.

Teachers say, not enough time for extras. This is not instead of, or in addition to, the CBSE curriculum. This is a way of teaching that curriculum.

Teachers say, I have too much to teach already. And I say, this will help you do what you're already doing. This will help the students absorb and digest the material. This way they will retain it.

It all depends upon the ingenuity of the teacher.

take characters, pretend to be one of these science characters and make a short story out of that. And then come in front of the class, enact your drama about the science concept that you developed.

A story-integrated curriculum.

These practices need to be put into some sort of books. Teachers need to read and be trained in using these.

The kindergarten and primary schools are making a start because they do teach language with stories. They do teach mathematics and other things at elementary level with stories. I think it needs to go to the next higher level to middle school. And again there are schools which cut out drama, art, music from their curriculum make way more for maths, science, physics.

It is not an alternative to the curriculum, it's a way of delivering the curriculum. Because usually, you know, the lecture method, we get it and we leave it. It comes in here, it goes out there, you know, we don't absorb it. Students don't absorb it. But if they physically are doing it and emotionally acting the character, they're more likely to – it's more likely to make an impression on them.

We are living in the *Age of Attention Deficit Disorder*. People tend to skim over what they read and see. Things don't sink in.

To fully integrate arts into the curriculum, this has to be brought into the way teachers are trained, and into Teacher Manuals for specific lesson plans.

Calling for teaching to be less content-centered is an excellent start. The follow-up is that exams must follow suit, exams must give students opportunities to demonstrate critical thinking in essay-writing, and the exam-readers must be trained to assess the critical thinking in these essays.

The challenge is our teachers don't know how to do it. I'm dean of a school. I'm training 55 teachers. I give them the kind of activities that I'm going to mention to you, and they say, oh, that's very nice. But we have the CBSE curriculum. We have to prepare the students to write the exam, to pass the exam on the content based curriculum. You are making pretty sentences here, pretty words, but the examination system is still content based.

The teachers ask – how can we make this viable?

We have to give examples and have the teachers do examples. And then the students will get excited and they'll have fun. And then the teachers will say, ah, the children are enjoying this. They're involved. The one thing we don't want as teachers, as students sitting back and just looking at us like we're a dancing bear, we want them to get up and get involved physically.

The entire system has to evolve, including for examinations. There need to be more essay questions where students can demonstrate critical thinking. And the people who read those essays need to be trained seriously so they can recognize critical thinking. Because now it's very hit or miss. Some readers will say it's good. Some people say it's bad. We don't even know what their criteria is. It is not just giving the correct information. The National Education Policy says we must assess the thinking process of the student.

So we must tell the National Education Policy people, yes, we agree with you and we're trying to implement it, but we need your support. We will give you our best practices, lesson plan by lesson plan. We will see how we can integrate story and drama into the lessons. And my school is CBSE, but other schools are other. So lesson plan by lesson plan, we will tell you how we are implementing it and you know, let's develop a set of best practices and let's publicize the best practices in the next National Education Policy. Let's get serious with the nuts and bolts.

Teachers need manuals that would guide them and give them ideas about possibilities for what the teachers could do for every single lesson.

Develop and share best practices.

### **Methods of Story-making**

Find stories, create stories. Storify material. Dramatise material.

Storify = Make stories based on information.  
Storying = Thinking about and creating stories.

#### **Making Stories out of Pieces**

Choose 3 or 4 words, some of which relate to the class' lesson. Teams of students are requested to compose stories using these words.

#### **Active Imagination**

#### **Question-Based Story-Making**

#### **Making Stories out of Situations**

Relating to the lesson: Recognise, Highlight, and/or Create Situations.

What information do you want the students to learn?

What ideas do you want them to think about?

What situations do you want them to consider?

Choose a beginning, middle, and end.

Choose a central action, and central characters.

What situations, what challenges, do you want the character(s) to face.

#### **Personification**

Turning an object into a character. Giving human characteristics to an object. The characteristics may include consciousness, speech ability, eyes/ears/mouth/etc. The character has hopes, fears, and motivations, and is in a situation that the character may enjoy or want to get out of. We can relate.

Turn Things into Characters (Personification). Enact These Characters. Let Stories Develop Around These Characters.

#### **Metaphor**

A thing in the here-and-now is represented by a familiar word, thus making the here-and-now more understandable.

Examples –

Life is a journey.

The eye is a window to the soul.

That is the icing on the cake.

You are the sunshine of my life.

All the world is a stage.

### **Symbol**

A thing represents an idea or feeling.

Examples –

A Heart may symbolise love.

A Dove may symbolise peace.

A Frown may symbolise anger.

A Smile may symbolise happiness.

When creating a story, one may engage in Metaphorical or Symbolic thinking.

---

### **Enacting Situations**

Pretend. Express and Interact (Speak and Move).

What will the students Pretend to be, do, or feel?

How will they have chances to Respond creatively?

How will they Interact with each other?

How will they Speak and Move in ways that support the study of a topic?

One can take any situation – a moment in a story, in an historical event, in a biological/chemical/mathematical process, etc – and invite participants to embody and act-out the various characters.

For example, "For this lesson, students form into groups and all of you take characters and each of you pretend to be one of these science characters and make a short story out of that.

### **Hot Seat**

I invite one child to take the role of a main character in the story. This child sits facing all of the other children, who ask the character why the character behaved the way the character did.

from **Shyama Sridharan**

Chemicals and other objects can be "personified", they can be turned into characters.

One can do this with any historical event and any situation from a book or a movie. You can even do it with biological and chemical processes.

For example: Erosion is when water comes against a rock. And over maybe hundreds of years, where's away the rock? So we had some people play the water, and some people play the rock, but usually in school, we don't let the children touch each other.

One way to do this is by inviting participants to strike a pose (become a "statue") relating to a situation – either individually or as a group (if done as a group, the result is called a "tableau").

Then the group leader could invite participants to "come to life" and Interact with each other.

Situation: Erosion. Characters: Water, Sand.

Ways of Enacting Situations include:

1) Mime (acting-out scenes only physically, non-verbally).

2) Improvisation (acting-out scenes including verbally).

3) Statue (individuals strike a pose). **Freeze! Come to Life!**

4) Tableau (members of a group strike poses).

5) An Imaginary Journey.

6) Monologue. (Monologue works well with studying various historical periods. It involves less Interaction between characters.)

From **Barry Stewart Mann**

---

### **Examples of Ways Stories Can Be Used To Teach Lessons, and Stories That Can Be Used To Teach Lessons**

#### **Panchatantra Frame Story**

There was once a king named Sudarshan. He had three sons who were not inclined to learn anything. They showed low intelligence and were unimaginative and slow. The King asked for advice to improve them. One of his trusted men identified Vishnu Sharma, an aged scholar as the most suitable person to improve his sons. The King invited Vishnu Sharma to court and offered him a hundred land grants in lieu of the services sought. Vishnu

refused the gift, for the knowledge, he said, was not to sell, and promised the King that within six months he would groom the princes into learned scholars capable of ruling the kingdom as wisely as their father.

Becoming more articulate. More able to absorb and respond to the details of the lesson material.

### Life Lessons

#### **This is the way we wash our face ... so early in the morning.**

Review in words, in song with movements, what one actually did in one's life.

### Children's Songs/Dances/Games

1) Saying and Doing. 2) Repetition with Variation. 3) Role-playing. 4) Q and A.

#### **One pot of water, one flower blooms.**

*oru kuuDam thaNNi koori, oru puu puutthaachchi*

<https://storytellinginstitute.org/3g.pdf>

#### **One stone, pick up; one stone, throw. One thousand parrots, have jumped and are flying.**

*oru kallu eDukkave, oru kallu eRiyave,*

*oraayiram kiLi thaavi paRakkave*

<https://storytellinginstitute.org/1g.pdf>

Links to lyrics and video for 14 Singing-games,

<https://storytellingandvideoconferencing.com/333.html>

### Lost in a Forest of Words, by Eric Miller

Teaching English Language.

Pages 8-10, on "Ways Verbal Play such as Storytelling and Word-games Can Be Used for

Teaching-and-learning Languages", <https://storytellinginstitute.org/2015a.pdf>

### Math

A tradition of sentence problems, word problems (which can be stories). Puts flesh on mathematical formulas.

A child was going to the child's grandmother's house. The grandmother's house was 90 kilometers away.

The train was going 30 kilometers per hour. How many hours would it take the train to get there?

6 apples, 3 children. How many apples does each child receive?

### History, Literature

What would you do if you were in this situation?

What are the character's motivations?

What are the character's options?

### Walter the Drop of Water, by Eco-tellers

Personification is a convention of story-making. Motivation. Chemistry.

Teaching the concept that H<sub>2</sub>O can go in three forms. So a way of teaching the concept is to give an illustration in story form.

<https://storytellinginstitute.org/387.pdf>

### King Ya-Ya.

Environmental Studies. Frogs go, mosquitos come.

<https://storytellinginstitute.org/388.pdf>

### Fantastic Voyage

Drama, Journey, Mission. Life or Death Urgency. Anatomy.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fantastic\\_Voyage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fantastic_Voyage)

### Pegasus, Phoenix, Dragon

Some examples: In the school I am dean of, recently we had three teams; Dragon, Phoenix, and Pegasus (a flying horse). These are mythical animals from ancient Greek culture.

So I said, "In addition to just saying those words, let's actually act them out. This will give you more of a sense, more of an understanding of, what we're talking about and imagining.

Okay, horses, let me see your wings. Let's see your wings. And okay, lift off everybody, and let's go to Kanyakumari, near Nagercoil. Let's all the horses, let's go to the ocean. Let's go swimming. So we go, we fly. Now dive into the water and stop flapping and start swimming. Horses can swim like this. So they all did like this. And then I said, okay, time to come back to school. Flap your wings again. Come up. Lift off the water. Come back to Nagercoil, come back into the school building and sit down."

So we took them on a little imaginary journey. So they got to think about what does it actually mean to talk about horses with wings? It's fantasy. So they could think about it.

Then the Phoenix, Phoenix is a Greek legend about resurrection that there was a terrible fire. And the Phoenix bird was burning ahead them all, like, oh, its paining, it's burning, it's burning, and burning. And Phoenix died. But then came back to life, said, resurrection, it's a miracle. So I had them act it out, and somebody said, oh, it's like Jesus Christ. I said, well, maybe in ancient Greece that was before the time of Jesus. And it was considered a miracle that the Phoenix came back to life.

Then the dragon, when the dragon gets angry, it can breathe fire. So I said, okay, everybody, let me see your angry face. Yeah, you can do this. Let me see you. Yes, frown the eyebrow. Eyebrows lit together. Yes, yes, yes. Okay. And when the dragon is angry, it will frown and breathe fire and burn anything in its way it doesn't like, so let me see. Okay. So they imagine themselves like that. That's a simple play acting.

### **Historical Re-enactment.**

#### **Living Newspaper.**

#### **Painting Enactment** (Tableau)

"George Washington Crossing the Delaware River."

#### **Sculpture Enactment** (Marina Beach statues)

For a number of years on the beach, I took people to the six statues, Kannagi, NSC Bose, Thiruvalluvar, Bharatidasan, G U Pope, and Avvaiyar. At each one, somebody said, I am Kannagi. And this is my story. I was born in Poompuhar. First I told it in Tamil, then they told it in English. So that's called a historical enactment. That's a great way of bringing history alive. Any historical situation. Let somebody play the character and say, I am that character. That's historical reenactment.

For example you ask people to **strike a pose** like Kannagi, a pose, a famous pose at the statue on Marina Beach, holding this and holding that and **then come to life**. What does she say? What does she do?

If you have a group that strikes a pose together as a group, that's called a **tableau**. And so that group can **come to life and interact**.

A painting and some statues that could be enacted,  
[https://storytellinginstitute.org/18\\_Oct\\_2024\\_a.pdf](https://storytellinginstitute.org/18_Oct_2024_a.pdf)

People enacting statues,  
[https://storytellinginstitute.org/18\\_Oct\\_2024\\_b.pdf](https://storytellinginstitute.org/18_Oct_2024_b.pdf)

### **Freedom Fighters role play, with debate**

Use role-playing to teach empathy and perspective-taking. In a history lesson, for instance, I asked students to assume roles of freedom fighters during India's Independence Movement. I placed them in these roles. Each student was assigned a different character – some well-known, others everyday people – who all had different motivations and challenges. They had to debate, collaborate, and strategize their approaches to achieving freedom. This helped students to experience and thus understand the diverse mind-sets of the individuals involved.

The Freedom Fighters :

Mahatma Gandhi –

Non violence resistance (Satyagraha).

Challenges: inner conflict and how to convince the people to be non violent during mass protests

Rani Lakshmi Bai ( [https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rani\\_Lakshmi Bai](https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rani_Lakshmi Bai) ) –

Defending her Kingdom and breaking stereotypes.

Challenges: limited resources, handling betrayal by her own people.

Sarojini Naidu ( [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarojini\\_Naidu#Death](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarojini_Naidu#Death) ) –

Empowering women and active participation in freedom struggle while balancing family life, overcoming male dominated movement and facing imprisonment.

From **Anuradha Rohra**.

### **Forest – Enact, Give Voice to, the Different Points of View Held by the Various Stake-holders.**

Tiger Project.

Business - Development (homes, resorts, agriculture, estates, mining, logging).

Preserve nature (lungs of the world).

Preserve traditional knowledge.

Tribal people.

### **Case Studies**

Inventions. Discoveries. What problems needed to be solved?

### **Biographies**

Dilemmas. Social needs. Medical needs. Challenges. Opportunities.

Also please see my essay,

"Ways Storytelling can be used for Teaching-and-Learning", <https://storytellinginstitute.org/2015e.pdf>

---

**Expressive Arts** for Teaching and Learning.

**Expressive Arts Therapy** for Counselling.

Imagination and Expression often occur through a variety of media, including –

- 1) story-creating (a cognitive and creative process),
- 2) story boarding (drawing), and
- 3) role-playing with improvised dialogue (speaking), and
- 4) action songs (moving and singing).

Before, during, and/or after the students read or hear a story:

**Drawing** (Story board, Illustration, Masks, Scenery).

Ask them to draw the story, a simple stick figures will do. Tell them to complete all the important scenes in a ten or 12 picture boxes. (Ask the children to divide the page into 10 or 12 boxes).

**Role-Playing** (Speaking and Moving)

Put the main characters (protagonist, antagonist) in the hot seats. Encourage the kids to ask questions to the characters. This increases their conversational skills.

**Ways of Speaking**

Rhythm, Melody. Accents. Speech patterns of various characters.

**Songs, and Action Songs**

Tell them a story which includes action songs, which often have repetitive phrases. Make them learn the action songs or phrases in the class itself (they get used to the English words and phrases).

**Ways of Moving, Quality of Movement, Posture**

From **Geethanjali Javid**.

---

### **Suggestions for Principals**

Hire teachers of visual art, drama, dance, music.

Identify teachers who are good at storifying (placing information into stories, and making up stories) and dramatising – teachers who do these things naturally. Have them train the other teachers.

Encourage all teachers to find/create ways of using story and drama. Show online resources to them.

Assign a teacher-in-charge regarding ways of using story and drama for teaching and learning.

Ask for the teachers to meet regularly about this.

Encourage teachers to:

Have the students act things out – to move and speak as if they were aspects of topics in the lesson.

Place students in small groups, in which the students can create, practice, or discuss something. The group members can then make presentations and give performances for the entire class.

Regarding all of the above, ask for best practices to be written up, and to be sent to you in a report. Make this report accessible generally.

Request demonstrations of the practices described in the report.

Have a list of best practices be compiled, and develop the culture of using story and drama for teaching and learning in your school.