

Mother Tongue Languages Symposium 2020

National Institute of Education, Asian Languages and Culture

The World of Stories – Fun in Language Learning and Values Inculcation

Stories are a great way to engage children in language learning and exposing them to the value system of a culture behind the language. Children immerse themselves in the language while enjoying the stories and pick up cultural nuances embedded in them. Being acquainted with the way values are highlighted will help children have deeper appreciation for the culture and better understanding of the language. The Asian Languages and Cultures Academic Group from the National Institute of Education is providing video resources and tips for parents to help their children learn their MTL and the corresponding cultures through story-telling, covering the whole process from selection of stories, the actual story-telling process and post story-telling discussion. This will help parents gain a better understanding of how to fully tap onto storytelling to help their children learn MTL and their values in a fun and engaging way at home.

Tips for Parents

Pre-storytelling

When deciding on a story, here are three points that parents could consider:

1. Clear values

Respect, responsibility, resilience, integrity, care and harmony (R3ICH) - these are the 6 all-encompassing values that are part of the MOE Character and Citizenship Education syllabus. Any of these values or a combination of them should be a part of the book of choice. By focusing on these values, parents will help their children to understand and appreciate them as well, and act as platform for the children to see how these values can be realized in their daily life.

2. Simple story line

There are basically 7 basic plots in storytelling. They are good vs evil, rags to riches, the quest, voyage and return, comedy, tragedy and rebirth. Based on the children's age, and for the impartation of values, this can be shortened to just 3:

- Good vs evil
- Rags to riches
- Quest

A simple story line will involve not more than 3 main characters (depending on the age group, stories for younger children tend to lesser main characters) and 1 main conflict. For example, a character trying to survive a challenge or having to undergo a test of resilience, and lastly, a happy ending.

3. Engaging or good illustration

Visual literacy is an important component in a child's learning. Children use all their senses to learn. Through visual imagery, children will be able to identify numbers and letters, find meaning in concepts and ideas, develop critical thinking skills and much more. There are basically 4 main components of language in visual language:

- Body language (this will involve dramatization of the story or the movement of the storyteller)
- Object language (use of objects to convey information)
- Sign and symbol language (pictorial representation of a message)
- Abstract language (graphics or logos to represent ideas)

Thus, books with good illustration will go a long way in enhancing the child's visual literacy skills.

Actual and Post Storytelling

In storytelling, remember the 3 "I"s - Interesting, Interactive and Inculcate.

For the first I, make your storytelling **INTERESTING** by choosing a particular voice that fits the character. This will bring the character in the story alive.

For the second I, be **INTERACTIVE**. Get the child to be involved in the story as well, either as one of the characters or just to voice some parts of the act. Choose one that repeats itself often so that the child knows his or her part well and can deliver it better. This will help the child learn the language and also improve on pronunciation.

For the last I, which is the post storytelling segment, **INCULCATE** values at the end of the storytelling by asking questions that clarify certain actions of the character e.g. Why do you think he did this? Could he have done it differently? Would you do the same? If so, why?

Video Resources

Lower Primary

Gibran and Friends

This story emphasizes the importance of respect through embracing differences. This is a tale about an elephant named Gibran who went into a jungle on a search for a new friend. However, his efforts to offer his friendship was always turned down. All the other animals were hesitant in befriending Gibran because he was different from them in terms of appearance and ability. One day, the jungle was in a ruckus when a lion, named Sirhan, started attacking the animals in the jungle. Gibran tried to stop Sirhan but his warnings fell onto deaf ears. Eventually, Gibran had to resort to using his strong trunk to scare and chase Sirhan away from the jungle. The other animals then appreciated Gibran and agreed to be friends with him despite their differences.

Upper Primary

Raziq, Oh Raziq! Pandemic Hits The World

This story highlights the value of resilience. Raziq's mum works as a nurse. She has been looking tired and their weekend plans were cancelled. However, Raziq was reminded by his teacher's words that he has to show care and concern for his mum.

Upon knowing school will be closed and lessons will be conducted online, Raziq felt uneasy. However, he was again reminded by his teacher that he has to be resilient in this pandemic which carries many lessons for him.