

International COMENIUS Summer course DE-2009-895-001

“Storyline Approach in the foreign language classroom”

Authenticity, ownership and differentiation help developing individual learning

Where? - Strathclyde University Glasgow

When? - 26.7.09 – 8.8.09



Organisation:

- University of Strathclyde
- Glasgow City Council
- IQSH Germany

Director of Course: Gisela Ehlers, IQSH Germany

(project coordinator of the Comenius project: creativdialogues.lernnetz.de)

Additional moderators: Tina Stute, IQSH Germany

Hannelore Tait IQSH Germany

Experts in the field worked as tutors during the course:

- **Steve Bell** – The Principles of Storyline
Educational consultant and Chairman of European Association for Educational Design and Storyline Scotland
- **Sallie Harkness** – Children’s literature and Storyline
Educational consultant of Storyline Scotland
- **Marion Sheridan** – Drama and Storyline
Lecturer University of Strathclyde (Jordan Hill Campus)
- **Gill Friel** – Writing and Storyline
Lecturer University of Strathclyde (Jordan Hill Campus)

The course participants were:

Number	Home country
13 teachers	Germany
1 teacher	Poland
1 teacher	Slovenia
1 teacher	Czech Republic

About the course:

The participants got to know the Storyline CAPITAL TOURS and discussed the Storyline approach as an alternative teaching method in the foreign language classroom.

The Storyline CAPITAL TOURS was developed for the language classroom (level A1-B1) offering many opportunities for cross curricular teaching/learning as well as for intercultural learning.

- The workshop started with an introduction providing the participants with the structures and aims of Storyline.
- Then the participants learned the difference between Storytelling and Storyline.
- They were offered a variety of children's literature and learned how to develop a Storyline out of a children's book.
- This was followed by a workshop about creating puppets and how to use them in the foreign language classroom.



- Then the participants got to know the many ways of introducing the first episode of a storyline by using the learners' prior knowledge.
- They created the characters and learned how to use a word or structure bank. The “normal” language work with tasks covering all skills was discussed. Some tasks were implemented.



- The participant from the Czech Republic presented her material and described tasks she offers to teachers of young learners.
- The participants then designed the story settings. They chose European capitals and informed themselves about their typical cultural events etc.
- An attractive frieze became the focus for lively discussions about second language teaching theory and the possibilities for using the approach in primary classes for starters as well as in secondary schools for advanced learners.



- The Slovenian teacher presented a PowerPoint of her experiences with very young learners. The participants were very impressed by the holistic and motivating work and the results of it.

- The participants became aware of the many opportunities for differentiating the language tasks for their learners. They were given a talk about the different aspects for differentiation work in the classroom.
- In addition they learned about and tried out drama methods. The participants discussed the opportunities for integrating drama into the Storyline and which special aims would be reached for the different language levels.



- Then they invented a range of incidents and classified them concerning their value for writing tasks. The difference between guided tasks (with a scaffold) and creative writing was being discussed. The tasks were tried out.
- As an ending for the Storyline the participants created different raps and poems.
- Several reflections during the course pointed out:
 - the motivating context which Storyline provides
 - the high integration of the individual ideas and interests of the pupils,
 - the authentic usage of the target language,
 - a good variety of differentiation and the collaborative outcome,
 - pupils' awareness of their individual learning, organising themselves and developing their learning strategies. (Life-long learning)
- The final reflection was in the form of group discussions. The participants saw that Storyline is not only an ideal strategy for developing language in an authentic context but also a good way for teaching in heterogeneous classes offering a positive learning atmosphere and the steps into individual life long learning.
- In the end the participants filled in the evaluation paper. (the results are attached)
- As the participants had to work on language tasks in the classroom as well as for public institutions in the afternoon they improved their language competence.
- The course had a reception in the City of Chambers where all participants could talk about their native experiences with three representatives of the city of Glasgow. In addition to this the teachers had many more opportunities to enrich their intercultural knowledge through city tours, the visits to several museums and theatres in town, meeting international guests at the university, a day trip to the highlands, a visit to Stirling castle, a trip to the capital Edinburgh and an international world championship of pipe bands in Glasgow.
- The participants took home: two books (Trainer Handbook + Storyline ideas for the teaching of English) and all the data of the course results.

The Storyline Approach in foreign language classes

Comenius Summer Course 2009 - 26th July 2009 – 8th August 2009

- Capital Tours -

Cooperation of the University of Strathclyde Education Glasgow and the Institut für Qualitätsentwicklung an Schulen SH Kiel
 Director of course: Gisela Ehlers Germany

Sunday 26 th July 09	Monday 27 th July 09 9h -12.30h	Tuesday 28 th July 09 9h -12.30h	Wednesday 29 th July 09 9h -12.30h	Thursday 30 th July 09 9h -12.30h	Friday 31 st July 09 9h -12.30h	Saturday 1 st August 09
Individual arrival	Getting to know each other # Storyline and foreign language teaching	<i>Educational consultant</i> Sallie Harkness: From Storytelling to Storyline Episode 1	<i>Educational consultant</i> Steve Bell: Let's start a storyline. Episode 1	<i>Educational consultant</i> Steve Bell: How to ask key question. Episode 2	How to develop all skills. Presentation 1 st reflection	Time for individual activities or
Check in at students' residence	Guided city tour Reception at the town hall	Which story books are suitable? Visit downtown bookshop	LUNCH	Collecting material for a presentation (travel agencies)	Collecting teaching material at Transport museum	Day tour: Scottish countryside and culture
Sunday 2nd August 09	Monday 3rd August 09 9h -12.30h Episode 3 Assessment and storyline	Tuesday 4th August 09 9h -12.30h <i>Educational consultant</i> Marion Sheridan: Drama and storyline Episode 4	Wednesday 5th August 09 9h -12.30h 2 nd reflection: Teaching aims and storyline tasks Episode 5	Thursday 6th August 09 9h -12.30h Episode 5 Final presentation	Friday 7th August 09 9h -12.30h 3 rd reflection: Advantages and disadvantages of storyline Evaluation of course	Saturday 8th August 09 Check out of students' residence
Time for individual activities	Scottish artists Visit of People's palace-museum	Mackintosh trail architect, designer and artist	LUNCH	Free	Free	Individual departure
		Preparation for final presentation Bagpipes concert		Free	Free	
					Farewell party	

Follow up activities:

1. The director of the course will offer a mail block with the possibility for online meetings.
2. All participants are on a Storyline user list and will be provided with new material.
3. The first meeting will take place in Hamburg in September 09.
4. The Slovenian teacher will offer two workshops during a teachers' language day in Kiel/Germany in February 2010.
5. The teacher from the Czech Republic will offer a workshop on creative language teaching on an international IATFL conference at the university of Hildesheim in February 2010



COURSE EVALUATION

The Storyline Approach

DE - 2009 - 895 - 001

		1pt.	2pts.	3pts.	4pts.	5pts.
1	The course contents met my expectations.				31%	69%
2	The course offered a big variety of ideas for my practical work in class.				31%	69%
3	The course also described the theoretical background of foreign language teaching.				37%	63%
4	I had the chance of an individual language improvement.				25%	75%
5	The course materials are helpful for my teaching.				31%	69%
6	The course instructors showed professional competence.				12%	88%
7	The course was well structured.			6%	31%	63%
8	The instructors responded to the participants' expectations and contributions.				31%	69%
9	The work climate during the session was good.				6%	94%
10	I had the chance to exchange ideas and experiences with other European teachers.			6%	12%	82%
11	I was satisfied with the course location.				18%	82%
12	I was satisfied with the accommodation.				31%	69%
13	The general organisation contributed to make the course successful.				12%	88%

Personal comments:

- I would welcome more opportunities to work with the other participants from the different families.
- This course was very inspiring and encouraging for using Storyline in my classes. I take home lots of ideas and practical hints.
- I would prefer to work together with teachers of my school type.
- I enjoyed the 2 weeks very much. Thank you!
- Thank you. I'll try it out in my classes - not only in English lessons
- It was so great. I thank you so much for this possibility and experience. I will try it out soon. The instructors were very competent.

Report

The Storyline Approach in foreign language classes (28th July – 8th August 2009)

By Joanna Smogorzewska (Poland)

The Storyline Approach course was my first Comenius course in which I have participated and it was also the best course I have ever participated in. It is because of many reasons.

- First of all – program of the course was very wide and very interesting. The course lasted two weeks, and in my opinion the whole time was used perfectly. In my opinion, the organizational board: Gisela Ehlers, Tina Stute and Hannelore Tait did the biggest work. They were working very long hours every day, when we have already finished, and they really did their best to learn us as much as they could. I am impressed by their involvement and their effort to prepare the whole, long course.
- As a participant I had an opportunity to meet many people who were involved in creating the storyline method. During the first two days we had classes with Sally Harkness. She was talking about connections between storyline and storytelling – where they have common points and where they are completely different and why. We had some practical exercises, which is always very important and let understand better the theory. Sally has also showed us many books for children, explaining which of them are the best and why. It was very important topic for me, because I am preparing doctoral thesis, connected to storyline and children's fairytales.
- During next few days we have met the second inventor of the storyline – Steve Bell. He used practical exercises to show us basics of the storyline. It is much easier to understand need of every rule and next steps when you can practice it.
- We also had amazing classes with drama teacher – Marion Sheridan. She was fabulous! Her drama classes were the best I have ever had. I have never liked drama

and I was rather skeptical about it, but it was really great. The most important thing was that I didn't feel that everybody are looking at me, but, on the other hand, I felt that I am an important part of the whole group. Fantastic feeling.

- The last, but not least person, I must tell about, was Gill Friel. She helped us during the whole course. Gill also showed us many great children's works, and in this way she gave us many ideas for school work with our pupils.
- The course was not only opportunity to learn more about the storyline method, but also to meet many interesting people. It was fantastic that during this two weeks we could improve our English and to exchange knowledge about school's system in Germany, Czech Republic, Slovenia and Poland and our experiences in working with children. I had no idea that there are so many similarities between those countries in education and so many similar problems.
- Besides the educational program we had many opportunities and tasks of going somewhere in the afternoons or evenings. It was great idea and gave us chance not only knowing better the city of Glasgow, but also to get to know each other and to share our national experiences.

I hope it was not the last Comenius course I have participated in.

Joanna Smogorzewska (Poland)