



AN INTRODUCTION TO STORYLINE – by Steve Bell and Sallie Harkness **A strategy for teaching in an enterprising and creative way**

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Storyline is a partnership between the teacher and the learners. The teacher designs the line (the chapters of the story) and the learners create and develop the story. The line aims at curricular content (knowledge) and skills practice, while the story provides the context within which the students will feel motivation through ownership. They create the characters that will bring the story to life. The line is designed in the form of key questions. Storyline is not only about knowledge and skills but also about feelings and attitudes.

PRINCIPLES

- The teacher starts from what the learners know by asking key questions.
- These are open questions which require imaginative and creative thinking.
- The questions have a sequence which forms the chapters of a story.
- Learners produce their answers in the form of conceptual models or hypotheses.
- Learners then test their hypotheses through questioning and research.
- A wide variety of techniques is used to explore and present their ideas, including visualising in two and three dimensions.
- Teachers use cooperative learning techniques and appropriate grouping.
- Visual work is displayed with care and effect.
- Teaching structures are employed which support success.
- Students' work is assessed in relevant and constructive ways.

HISTORY

Many years ago in the mid-60s new educational guidelines were produced to recommend more integration in Scottish primary schools. This gave birth to the terms Environmental Studies and Aesthetic Subjects. In 1967, an Inservice Staff Tutor Team was formed at Jordanhill College of Education. Members of this team helped teachers – mainly in the west of Scotland, to experiment with Topic Studies as a form of integration. Over the 70s and 80s these Staff Tutor topics became very popular and many workshop courses were organised to promote them. Storyline, the name now given to a more advanced form of this approach, has been adopted and developed by teachers and teacher educators in many different countries, including Scandinavia, The Netherlands, the United States, Singapore and Thailand. Recent curricular advice in Scotland is aiming again at more creative, enterprising and imaginative thinking for which Storyline provides a proven teaching strategy.

INTERESTING FACTS

- Storyline is an educational philosophy. It is basically a design idea that encourages and models democracy and good citizenship. It can be used for learners of any age and for many purposes.
- It has been found to provide a valuable context, audience and purpose for the use of ICT.
- Storyline can also be very valuable as a strategy for designing enterprise topics.
- Storyline fits well with principles and practice of a Curriculum for Excellence.