

# iteach

Developing International Teachers of English

## Catch Your Students' Attention

[www.inspireteach.co.uk](http://www.inspireteach.co.uk)



## Teaching as Performing

Teaching and Performing share a variety of analogies. As you know, when you are teaching you often feel like the classroom is your stage.

Think about some of the analogies between being a performer on the stage and being a teacher.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

Man is the storytelling animal and it is through storytelling that we establish relationships between people. In our lives we establish many relationships with people by telling our story, and they do the same with us. When I say storytelling, I am not only referring to an actual narrative based on language, but to all the different ways we use to express our identity.

To tell a story you need:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

By referring to the concept of valency, which linguistics has borrowed from chemistry, in an analogy with the number of electrons that an atom needs to complete its outermost orbital, verbs require a number of arguments (including the subject) to complete their meaning.

Verbs like to show, to teach, to tell are all verbs which need 3 arguments:

I<sup>1</sup> | [verb] | you<sup>2</sup> | something<sup>3</sup>

Can you think of other verbs like these?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

In order to TEACH we need a \_\_\_\_\_, a \_\_\_\_\_ to be taught and an \_\_\_\_\_ to teach.

Choose one of the verbs from your list and complete the same sentence:

In order to \_\_\_\_\_ we need a \_\_\_\_\_, a \_\_\_\_\_ to be \_\_\_\_\_ and someone to \_\_\_\_\_ it to.

Notice how all the verbs in your list establish a tripartite relation between the arguments.

**A lesson is a tripartite relationship that links the teacher, the students and the content.**

Storytelling is what gets people engaged because we express our identity through a story. A lesson is the story through which both teachers and students express their identity.

Storytelling is an action that we are all used to as both tellers and listeners. In all situations of our life we express our identity through a story. Examples of everyday stories are explaining your symptoms to your GP or discussing your goals with your personal trainer.

Can you think of other examples of everyday storytelling?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

So, how do you come up with a story?

The story needs to be:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

Use new information in your story to make it relevant.

## Try it Tomorrow!

Try and start your next class with a story. Initially you might have to draft it beforehand, but you will soon notice how quickly stories will naturally come to you. You will be able to match your stories with the content you want to teach, and you will catch your students' attention immediately!