

Developing Creative Expression In Primary School Pupils Through Fairy Tale Retelling

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ABSTRACT

This paper proposes a classroom approach to developing creative expression through fairy tale retelling in primary education. It focuses on changing the narrator's perspective while preserving the logical relationships between events. The proposed sequence combines attentive reading, discussion of character motives, guided retelling and revision. An illustrative task based on the Uzbek folk tale Zumrad and Qimmat shows how pupils can move from reproducing a familiar plot to constructing a reasoned interpretation. The paper offers teaching recommendations and formative assessment criteria; it does not report experimental findings.

KEYWORDS: Primary education, fairy tales, creative expression, narrative perspective, retelling, formative assessment.

INTRODUCTION

Fairy tales provide primary school pupils with recognisable characters, memorable conflicts and a manageable sequence of events. However, a lesson centred entirely on recalling the plot leaves limited room for pupils to make artistic choices. A child may reproduce a story accurately without deciding how a character speaks, why an event matters or which details deserve emphasis. This paper addresses that teaching problem by proposing a transition from reproductive retelling to retelling from a character's perspective. The aim is to describe practical conditions under which a familiar fairy tale can become material for independent oral and written expression.

Theoretical basis

Vygotsky's account of socially mediated development offers a basis for organising work in which teacher guidance and peer interaction support children's growing independence [1]. Applied to the present proposal, this means that the teacher initially models how to connect an action with a motive, then gradually reduces the prompts. Bruner's discussion of narrative and the imaginative construction of possible worlds provides a complementary perspective [2]. For the classroom approach described here, narrative is treated as a way to explore how intentions and interpretations shape a story. These theoretical connections justify the instructional design but do not establish its effectiveness in a particular class.

Teaching sequence

The proposed sequence begins with reading or listening to a short, age-appropriate version of a fairy tale. Pupils identify what happens at the beginning, which event creates the central

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difficulty and how the difficulty is resolved. The teacher checks understanding before introducing creative changes. This initial work gives pupils a shared reference point and helps them distinguish details found in the text from details that they later invent.

During the next stage, pupils choose a character and consider what that character knows, wants and feels at a particular moment. Prompts such as “What did your character notice first?” and “What could your character not know?” help establish a consistent viewpoint. The teacher should accept different interpretations when pupils can explain their connection to the text. An interpretation becomes a starting point for discussion rather than an answer that every pupil must repeat.

In the guided retelling stage, pupils reconstruct one episode in the first person. For example, after reading Zumrad and Qimmat, they may retell a selected encounter from Zumrad’s perspective. A pupil can add a brief thought, describe an object noticed by the character or create a line of dialogue. The task requires the pupil to preserve the main action while making deliberate choices about its presentation. Added details should be identified as creative additions, especially when the class compares different versions of the tale.

A short exchange between partners follows the first attempt. The listener explains which part was easy to imagine and asks about one unclear action. The storyteller then revises the account by adding an explanation, changing an unsuitable word or restoring a missing connection. This feedback procedure gives revision a specific purpose. It also makes listening part of the creative task, because pupils must follow another child’s interpretation closely enough to respond to it.

Differentiation and assessment

For pupils in Grades 1 and 2, the task can remain oral and focus on a single episode supported by three picture prompts. Children who find extended speaking difficult may first draw an event and explain the drawing in two or three sentences. In Grades 3 and 4, pupils can prepare a short written retelling and compare it with the original episode. The language of instruction should remain the language of the regular reading lesson; this proposal concerns creative literacy and does not require teaching the tale in English.

Formative assessment should examine narrative coherence, consistency of viewpoint, expressive detail and the pupil’s ability to improve the first version. Originality should be judged through a meaningful contribution rather than the number of unusual events added. A retelling that gives a familiar action a convincing emotional explanation may show more control than one containing many disconnected inventions. Spelling and handwriting can receive separate feedback so that pupils understand which aspect of their work they are revising.

The teacher may retain an initial retelling and a later piece produced under comparable conditions. Comparing these samples can inform individual feedback, but improvement cannot automatically be attributed to fairy tale work alone. A formal evaluation would require explicit criteria, consistent assessment procedures and an appropriate research design. The activities proposed here therefore remain a methodological framework to be tested, rather than evidence of measured learning gains.

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Conclusion

Retelling a fairy tale from a character's perspective offers a practical way to connect reading comprehension with creative expression. Its value lies in the decisions pupils make about motives, details and the order of presentation. Clear textual boundaries, gradual withdrawal of support and opportunities for revision are central to the proposed approach. Used within ordinary primary reading lessons, these activities can provide structured opportunities for children to develop an individual narrative voice while engaging thoughtfully with Uzbek folk literature.

References

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