

Case Study 6.4: Two examples of using stories

Stories taken apart and put together

Mrs Ndaba's Grade 6 class had brought stories from home and illustrated them. On each page, they had written a sentence and drawn a picture to match it. The pages had been tied together to make books.

Her colleague, Ms Mdlalose, who taught the Grade 3s, had seen the illustrated stories, and asked to borrow them for a reading activity with her children. Mrs Ndaba came and watched.

Ms Mdlalose divided her class into five groups. She gave each group a story but she untied the pages. She then gave each pupil in the group one page of the story, making sure that she mixed the order of the pages. Each pupil had to read the sentence on their page to the group. The group discussed the sentences to decide which order the sentences should go in.

Ms Mdlalose asked one pupil from each group to read their group's story to the class and they commented about the order. As a class, they selected their favourite story and prepared a five-minute drama to perform this story.

Collecting local stories

I asked my Grade 2 children to learn a story from their family members or neighbours. I gave them about a week to collect and learn the story. I then invited one or two children a day to tell their story to the class, using different voices, gestures and actions to accompany it. Not everyone was confident enough to do this, so I let them choose whether or not they wanted to. For each story, I wrote a few key words on the chalkboard.

The children told their stories in their local language. Afterwards, I asked the class to draw pictures of the key events or main characters in a story they had heard. If they were confident, I encouraged them to write down some of the key words. Working in pairs, I let the independent readers share their words and pictures with a beginning reader, getting the beginning reader to try and read the written words. Sometimes I challenged them to think of key words in the story that begin with a certain letter. (For example, Baron told a story about a monkey, so I asked them to try and find words beginning with 'm'.)

By sharing the stories from their communities with their peers, this activity builds connections among the children in the class.