



Storytelling where the students decide - a new emphasis at Munsö school!

Violet Norrestad, principal:

We are always looking for methods that meet the needs of different children. Kids learn in diverse ways and it is important that everyone has the opportunity to develop, experience self-esteem and feel safe. This project began as an anti-bullying initiative, but now we have seen that it is so much more. In the future, we intend to use the method to combine different disciplines. The plan is to implement at least two narrative processes each semester.

What happened in this project is incredible! We are so impressed! The feedback from the teachers is all positive! It is just as exciting each time you come!

In Spring 2010 Munsö school in Ekerö began a partnership with Stories for Society (www.storiesforsociety.com) to further develop teaching using a unique storytelling method. The method allows the children themselves to create a story, by writing, drawing and dramatizing within the parameters of certain conditions, themes and topics. The students may fantasize and solve problems together, while at the same time taking responsibility for meeting their goals.

After conducting two pilot projects in SfS, it was decided that encouraging teachers to use and adapt the method based on their own circumstances would facilitate the integration of the method in everyday school life. For this reason, all the teachers at the school participated in a two day training in June 2011. During the fall, two of the teachers applied the method in their own classrooms with the support of two trained facilitators from SfS.

Our projects have combined life skills, image and Swedish. The school's current needs have determined the themes used. So far we have worked with:

- To be good enough
- We are all the same, but different
- Do you concern me?

The method allows for many possibilities of combining different subjects, for example, English, Social Studies, math, etc. We are now thinking about how the rich material the children have already produced may be used in additional contexts and how we can continue to expand on their work to aide their learning of various subjects. We believe it is worth taking advantage of the children's engagement for their stories in future learning.

We continue to work together to developing the method. We welcome additional schools to get involved, so that we may share best practices and establish the children's own Story-library. Are you interested in participating or do you want more information? Go to:

www.storiesforsociety.com or contact
Eva Norén at eva.noren@storiesforsociety.com, 0736423613 or
Julie Lindahl på julie.lindahl@storiesforsociety.com, 0706610015

What are people saying about using the method?

Martina, teacher who participated in the pilot project and is now applying the method herself:

If feels good to that we are working with this now that we are being asked to dig deep in the new teaching plan. This method offers so many possibilities to live up to the expectations that are being set. The process is organic in that it starts with a core that then expands creatively to include more and more subjects. It never ends.

A We- feeling grows among the children. We are the ones who did this! It was not the teacher or anyone else who said that we should do this! It is something that has come from within. It is their story.

It has been a learning and growing experience to hand over the control to the children and see that they take responsibility when I do not decide too much. It leaves room for others to contribute with "I can write", "I can fix", "Oh, well then I can do this part". Those who might have been hesitant and waiting have eventually joined in and participated more and more. By the end, everyone is really into the story and knows what will happen and what characters are involved. They also feel comfortable taking up more space themselves.

Anna, teacher that led her own process with the children:

Working with stories opens up ideas for how one can continue expanding on the curriculum by incorporating other subjects. This was completely unexpected. The ideas for tying the stories together with other subjects continue to develop, both from the teachers and the students. Students get personally engaged because the starting point is something they themselves created. They are also more motivated to write, read and learn when they know what the text is about.

The teaching plan places emphasis on developing debating and presentation skills, which is something this method does very well. It is an interaction between the students as they talk through and think critically about things in order to find a creative solution.

Students in grade 4 and 5 that participated in the process:

"We need to send this in to get published!"

"Wow, we are authors!"

"Couldn't we show this to the entire school?"

"What is going to happen next? Couldn't we keep going with the story?"

"Couldn't we start the story even earlier? What happened before?"

"I thought it was really fun to work with our island. It turned out to be a good story and it was cozy."

"It was a good way to learn because it was so much fun."

"The most fun thing about the island was getting to create ourselves. To make it even better we could use paint, cardboard, a bigger island..."

"I thought it was really fun to work with our island because we got to imagine, draw, and make up things that could not happen in real life."

"It is fun to work in a group."

"The most fun thing was to draw."

"The most fun thing was to put on a performance for the other team because it went really well."

"Next time, I think it should be about a magical school."

...and so on...