

Storytelling in the Second Language Classroom

Gill Pennington

Abstract

The power of storytelling is universal. Throughout history, and throughout the world, communities have gathered together their stories as a way of making meaning from their experiences and of making connections between themselves. This paper examines the role stories play in helping us to identify ourselves as cultural beings and it describes how this identity relates to those learning an additional language in a new setting. With reference to 20 young students in an Introductory English Centre, the paper documents the classroom activities that surround eight storytelling sessions. The ways in which these activities contribute towards the children's cognitive, emotional and linguistic development are examined and the paper concludes with an affirmation of the value of storytelling as a vehicle for second language development.