WHY: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Telling good stories is like weight lifting for the brain since stories force listeners to make connections between their world, feelings, and ideas (Stibich, 2014).

The structure and sequencing of stories make them engaging and a natural way for the brain to think about and process information (Allen & Scozzi, 2012).

People love good stories, whether real or make believe, because stories usually resemble the reality with which we are familiar but find difficult to define (Scott & Marzano, 2014).

Storytelling conveys the plot structure and language of the story that enhances a student's reading comprehension (Marsh, 2013).

When a listener hears a story, the story activates parts of the listener's brain so that the experiences and ideas in the story become those of the listener (Widrich, 2012).

Since stories show how ideas interact, they can be extremely useful as a foundation for helping students think critically (Allen & Scozzi, 2012).

Storytelling is an effective way to enhance a student's emotional connection to the content and conceptual understanding and helps students' *digital brains* become more attentive (Sprenger, 2010).

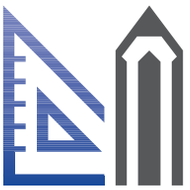
Students often remember stories better when they create original ones (Allen, 2008).

Children naturally develop a sense of story, and the brain's fascination with story continues throughout our lives (Caine et al., 2005).

Children's favorite stories involve the challenges faced by protagonists who overcome adversity to achieve their goals (Willis, 2007a).

Stories created by teachers can assist students in understanding number operations in a variety of contexts (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 2000).

After a period of intense learning, storytelling enables the brain to relax and facilitates the retention of newly acquired material (Jensen, 2000).



HOW: INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

WHO: Elementary/Middle/High
WHEN: Before or during a lesson
CONTENT AREA(S): Cross-curricular

- Have a story stool or bench in your classroom and sit on it every time you tell students stories related to a concept being taught. No notes

are taken during storytelling so that students can give their undivided attention to you in this nonthreatening environment. Remember, never tell a story unless its purpose is to teach or reinforce a curricular concept to be remembered. Warren Phillips, exemplary science teacher, used his story bench regularly and held students rapt attention with his stories about science concepts.

WHO: Elementary/Middle/High
WHEN: During a lesson
CONTENT AREA(S): Cross-curricular

- The brain needs a purpose. Whenever giving students either narrative or informational text to read silently or orally, always give them the purpose for reading. For example, say to students, *We are reading the next two pages to find out why . . .*

WHO: Elementary/Middle/High
WHEN: During a lesson
CONTENT AREA(S): Cross-curricular

- Create stories, factual or fictional, that can be used to illustrate a cross-curricular concept that you are teaching. Integrate the stories into your lesson delivery and watch students more easily retain the concept. If your story is humorous or emotional, the recall value is enhanced. For example, use the following cross-curricular stories to teach students to remember the 13 original colonies in social studies (written by Gloria Caracas, El Oro Way Elementary School) and the concept of natural selection in science (written by Warren Phillips, Plymouth Middle School).
    - There once was a cow named Georgette **(Georgia)**. She was a Jersey **(New Jersey)** cow and gave lots of milk. She was strange because she liked to wear yellow underwear **(Delaware)**. One day, she went up the Empire State Building **(New York)**. Up there she sang two Christmas carols **(North Carolina, South Carolina)**. Then she came down and walked down the road **(Rhode Island)**. She was carrying a massive **(Massachusetts)** Virginia **(Virginia)** ham **(New Hampshire)**. She bent down to pick up a pencil **(Pennsylvania)** and proceeded to do a connect-a-dot **(Connecticut)** of Marilyn **(Maryland)** Monroe (Tate, 2012, pp. 121–122).
    - The light-colored form of the moth was the predominant form in England prior to the beginning of the industrial revolution. Then darker-colored forms of the moth became much more prevalent. In areas where pollution had darkened the landscape, the darker moths were better camouflaged and less likely to be eaten by birds. Later, after the use of coal declined, under less-polluted conditions, the light-colored moths prevailed again. Go figure! (Tate & Phillips, 2011, p. 125).