

Exercise 3

Read the article about how storytelling can help communicate ideas, and then complete the notes.

Communicating ideas using storytelling

All of us have heard a really great story at one time or another, and most people have a favourite one that they remember, perhaps from way back in their early childhood. But as well as stories being told just for entertainment, they are also used in all sorts of situations where learning might be taking place. This could be a training session in a workplace, or perhaps in more typical learning environments like schools, colleges or universities. But no matter where a story is being told, it is very important for the speaker to research their audience, so these listeners can enjoy the whole storytelling experience.

Let's start by considering why it is that people such as teachers or workplace trainers so often decide to use stories in their sessions. Well, for one thing, it is generally thought that putting information into a story adds more context for learners. You don't necessarily get this with a list of facts, or with particular details that are presented on their own. Of course, a big part of the skill of a great storyteller is to make sure that the story's central message is clear to the people listening. This is particularly important, as we know from research that when information is presented in the form of a story, people remember details far more accurately. So, naturally, it is vital that what the listener takes away from the session is in fact what the storyteller intended!

When it comes to the type of information that needs to be communicated, considerable research has been carried out which has indicated that complex ideas become easier to understand when they are presented through the means of a story. As a result of this, therefore, the people listening tend to feel more positive about learning new things. And if a storyteller is able to include something amusing, well, that's even better!

It is generally true that every one of us has different ways we like to do things, and different preferred learning styles, and this is also true for storytelling. Having the opportunity to watch other storytellers means that they can acquire new techniques from other people. As a final point, the storyteller will generally be given a specific time to tell their story, which will be set or agreed in advance. It will of course be necessary for the person speaking to keep to this set time, and not talk for too long. For this reason, it is important for them to practise getting the timing right beforehand. It could make all the difference and help make the event go really well for both the storyteller and their listeners.

Question 9

How storytellers should prepare for telling a story:

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