

(ORAL) STORYTELLING 101

Presenting a list of skills to practice. Think of them as powers to call on / tools in your toolbox / toys in your sandbox / songs sung by the merfolk / (pick your metaphor). Many of these powers work for reading out loud as well as oral storytelling.

- power of **PASSION** (if you're into it, more chance that they'll be into it.)
- power of **PEOPLE PRESENT** (*connect to your audience. make it relevant!*)
- power of the **PERSONAL** (overlay your personal experience! use your body and its gestures!)
- power of **PITCH, RHYTHM, VOLUME** (variation=good. even half-a****d voices are effective!)
- power of the **PAUSE** (for comic effect, suspense, emphasis, letting meaning sink in... it's all about the timing.)
- power of **REPETITION, SONG, RHYME, ALLITERATION** and other poetic/rhetorical devices (the younger your audience, the more important these become.)

further tips for oral storytelling & story creation:

- Balance action & exposition: see what works with your audience
- Losing them? Add suspense.
- Describe body sensations, and internal feelings of your characters. (i.e. *"Ziggy's stomach felt all fluttery, like when it was their turn to speak in front of their class. Ziggy was worried."*) (This helps build sensorial intelligence & emotional intelligence.)
- *Memorization tip!* Storyboard your story: draw a series of images to recall the scenes in sequence as you tell it.
- Or, make it up spontaneously! (Mind drawing a blank? Ask for input from kids! Such as characters' names & pronouns.)
- A story creation recipe I like to use for extemporaneous and shared storytelling & singing:

Main character +
a few things about them (*what they like, personality traits, family/community structure & values, etc*)
a problem (*personal, social, political; again-- where the problem is NOT their gender or other social identities*) +
friends who offer advice/try to help +
it doesn't work, until +
finally something does work, or
/they have to make a hard moral decision or
/they learn something important, or
/utter silliness ensues.

- Practice whenever possible. (Read your source material through several times. Memorize the key refrains.)

¹This handout was developed by Encian Pastel for the workshop "Storytime! Promising Practices and Troubling Tropes in the Emerging Field of Gender Expansive Children's Literature," given at the Gender Spectrum Conference on 7/8/2018. For updates to this handout and more information, visit genderjusticeinearlychildhood.com or contact genderjusticeinearlychildhood@gmail.com.