

LEARNING WITH REAL-WORLD STORY

How can story-sharing activate ESD?

Conventional subject teaching and learning often focuses on the giving and receiving of knowledge. Sometimes abstract concepts are taught without integrating affective elements and these may be poorly situated in a local cultural setting. This is where the use of inspiring and engaging stories to activate story sharing, as a learning process can be a powerful educational tool. It is often much easier to understand and assimilate new ideas when they are presented within the framework of a story and most teachers are highly proficient in storytelling. For generations, storytelling has been a means of education, entertainment and cultural induction. A key function of traditional stories has been to share moral values in younger generations.

Stories can initiate various pedagogically important processes, especially in primary education. "Talk has always been highly valued in primary classrooms in terms of literacy and the potential to develop critical thinking and effective communication skills" (Fitzgerald & Smith, 2016, p. 71). (Start-up) stories support and activate a dialogic open narrative process and deeper communication: Children react to a story, ask questions, share their own experiences (that are similar or quite different from those in the story), hear different points of view, share different social voices and present and discuss their tentative understandings of scientific theories.

Work with story to activate story-sharing in ESD learning processes can thus help teachers to raise issues to encourage students to share their experiences and ideas. In this way it becomes possible to share issues in an engaging form, to bring in new ideas, theories and concepts from textbooks for example and to bring knowledge to life with the inclusion of intergenerational knowledge as cultural heritage. Narrative skills are stimulated through the interaction between the narrator and listener(s), along with the acquisition of verbal and non-verbal narrative patterns and the development of narrative structures.

Developing with story and story sharing in Handprint approaches to ESD

In our Handprint CARE work with teachers we noted how learning was activated with real-world, true stories in story-sharing deliberations on local matters of concern. The curriculum-based and knowledge-mediated deliberations help activate lived experience, ethical dispositions and the creative ideas of learners. Teachers on a Fundisa (or Learning) for Change course in southern Africa noted how working with the inclusion of heritage and real-world stories enabled learners to begin to see school subject knowledge in the world around them.

Stories centred on real-world sustainability concerns were used in the early Handprint action approach at the Centre for Environment Education (CEE). The stories were useful for activating an **Explore-Discover-Think-Act (EDTA)** methodology (see Figure 6) as part of its *Paryavaran Mitra* (Friend of Environment) programme in schools in India (Pandya & Gorana, 2011). The emphasis here was on learners taking their learning beyond the classroom to engage with sustainability concerns of their local area. The local learning provided them with real-world findings to think about so that they could deliberate possible solutions or at least ease the challenges faced. Individual or collective Handprint actions for sustainability can then follow. The EDTA approach also encouraged learners to reflect and share their experiences with a wider community.

In a similar way ESD centred on matters of concern of local relevance gave rise to support problem-based approaches. Figure 6 also shows how these experiential learning approaches correspond with the earlier EDTA schema outlined above. The WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) drew on these learning progressions for their locally relevant themes (LoReT) approach as part of a set of 'Methodologies for the Future' (Sellgren, 2012).

In this way – and according to Edward's task sequencing model (see Chapter 5) – we approached ESD as a learning journey (see Figure 6) emerging around story-sharing (Q1) and developing with the acquisition of subject knowledge. Here start-up stories were shared and explored to open up tangible and concrete issues while inviting students to share their stories and ideas including sharing any gaps in their knowledge. Story-sharing opens the way to clarifying ethical solidarity and raises questions for finding out more. This can be taken further

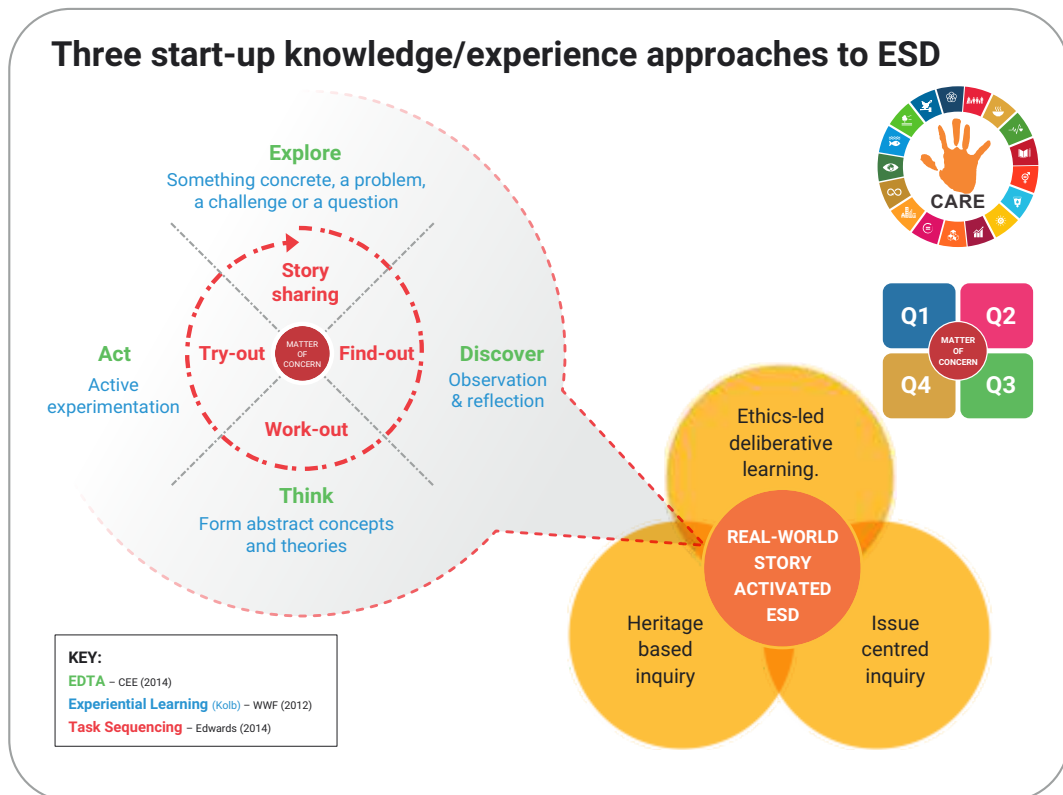


Figure 6: The integration of diverse task sequences into a cultural historical four-quadrant model of process for situated learning

through local enquiry (Q2) and deliberative learning centred on clarifying detail, working out possible solutions (Q3) and trying out sustainable solutions and lifestyles in small-scale change challenges (Q4).

What was notable across these early and emerging experiential and action learning approaches is that work with real world story for activating ESD reflected a mix of three key processes reflected in Figure 6:

- Ethical deliberation
- Issue-centred inquiry to solve problems, and
- Heritage and history-based inquiry to understand the origins of ethical concerns and sustainability issues.

Here real-world story and story sharing out of life experience was the catalyst for activating ESD around a mix of heritage, sustainability issues and ethical concerns.

Clarifying the role of story in Handprint CARE as ethics-led learning actions

Learning with story in Handprint CARE is centred on sharing real-world stories that we have experienced, heard about and are 'learning to read together' in the world around us. 'Real-world' is used alongside 'real-life' to point to how learning engages both the physical realities in the world around us and the life experiences of our students.

Appropriate stories should help engage attention. They are usually characterised by a short introduction to place, time and the main actor(s); sustainability related practice is described; and an account of the engagement with a concern may also be described. The story can be left open-ended for endings to be formulated by the learners.

Using real-world stories helps teachers to share sustainability issues in an engaging form, and to bring ideas, theories and concepts from textbooks (if used) to life, to include intergenerational knowledge as cultural heritage, and to combine this with sustainability concerns of the present and future. Story sharing

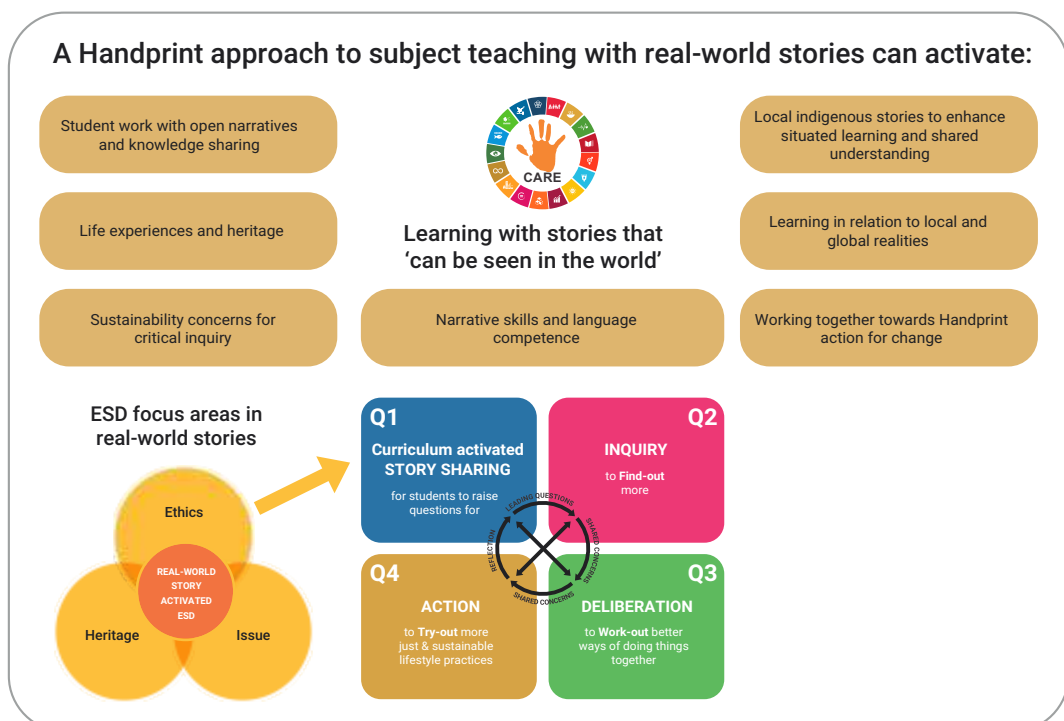


Figure 7: Pedagogical benefits of Handprint CARE's story-sharing

serves to locate and invite the plural inclusion of social, heritage / historiographic dimensions, to revisit what is already known to build “common knowledge” (Edwards & Mercer, 1987) or to recognise a gap in the knowledge. Local indigenous stories can stimulate the development of higher order thinking such as making comparisons and understanding the concepts of change and continuity that have occurred over time. Teachers and learners can use talk to work through their science ideas in co-defining and co-learning processes that are central to ESD as shown in the open four-stage model of process in Figure 7.

Deepening of local relevance

Stories that are both stimulating and that connect schoolwork with the local reality not only contribute to a positive learning environment but also support situated and transformative learning: “Meaningful transformation and transformative actions for sustainable development are most likely to take place in the community. It is in their daily lives, at the community level, where learners and people make their choices for sustainable development and act upon them. It is also in the local community where people find partners for their sustainability efforts” (UNESCO, 2020, p. 34).

In such educational settings characterised by “active learning”, learners are closely involved in the educational process and contribute as agents of change. By creating learning environments in primary school classes that encourage learners to acquire and extend knowledge and values through deeper discussions and reflections, by offering learner-led inquiry and activities (actively supported by their teachers in this process), learners can see why and understand that their learning matters. Simultaneously they learn that sustainability related issues often cannot be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no'.

Many of the Handprint CARE start-up stories (see exemplars in Part Two) are centred on local matters of concern that raise questions for deliberative enquiry and open-ended, ethics-led experimentation.

An ancient form of storytelling through art/pictures called Kamishibai has been explored in this Handbook (see Part Three). Kamishibai/paper drama is a famous form of storytelling from the 12th century in Buddhist temples across Japan. This form of storytelling with pictures has the potential to lead the way to future sustainability, since the stories not only provide a positive learning pathway for

Working with open real-world story and heritage



Figure 8: Kamishibai became *umkhomba ndlela* 'stories that show the way'

learners but also inspire them to take positive actions towards greater social justice and future sustainability.

In southern African ESD design work with teachers and young children, the Japanese Kamishibai was re-named '*Umkomba Ndlela*' or stories that 'point the way'. Such stories are inclusive of local culture, care and future sustainability (see Figure 8). Similar work is being done in Germany and Mexico and the emerging picture story sequences have been found to open up a sense of cultural diversity along with commonalities and similar concerns in *local* school-in-community settings. (See Part Three for exemplars of picture story sequences.)

Concluding Insights

Real-world stories that invite students to share their experiences and ideas in their lessons can be the foundations for positive learning actions to resolve matters of concern in relation to future sustainability practices.

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