10 English through the arts

This chapter brings together a number of papers which explore the use of stories, songs, film and performance art in ELT. The first four papers address the use of literature in the classroom. **Birgit Strotmann** outlines the advantages of using stories in an EMI context, specifically in Spain; **Elisaveta Maslova** describes her use of fictional books that portray business activities in a BE context; **Amalia Babayan** outlines the production of her reader, showing how literature can enhance cross-cultural understanding; and **Annett Kaminski** traces the development of the *Goldilocks* narrative, with implications for teaching. Moving on to music, **Ian Michael Robinson** reports on an initiative designed to use the songs of the Beatles in an ESP context. Film is the topic of **Jan-Erik Leonhardt**'s paper, which presents research into film literacy. Finally, **Efi Tzouri** shows how Theatre of the Oppressed techniques can be used to empower refugees and promote social justice.

10.1 The use of storytelling in English-medium instruction

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Introduction

Neuropsychological research has shown the effectiveness of storytelling as a technique to make content memorable and transformative. Research (McNett 2016) substantiates the claim that interpreting the world through strategies of characterisation, relationship and interaction is part of the human neuropsychological make-up. Therefore, a predisposition to react positively to storytelling exists, converting storytelling into an excellent tool for making content more memorable and more actionable.

As a result, storytelling can be particularly useful in English-medium (EMI) contexts, where high cognitive demands are combined with complex linguistic ones and can result in learner frustration if not properly scaffolded. The mediating role of storytelling within the context of the 4Cs (content, cognition, communication and culture) can provide the instructor with a valuable tool, guiding both input and output of learners.

Context

While the debate regarding the effectiveness of EMI continues, practitioners struggle with the challenges of quality delivery of content knowledge in an L2 environment (Marsh *et al.* 2013). The activities presented here are an example of how storytelling can support teachers and learners in EMI environments by providing a context that

allows the processing of complex content in a language-rich environment.

The setting for this teaching experience was a second-year group of Spanish university students taking a dual degree in International Relations with Global Communication. Students were at C1 level and were being taught through English as the vehicular language. The teaching experiences were part of two courses in strategic communication skills and aimed to do the following:

1 raise students' awareness of text types and their characteristics;
2 elicit oral and written production through text conversion; and
3 create a memorable and motivating experience allowing students to assimilate concepts such as register, lexical density, lexical fields, prosody, etc.

Two sample storytelling activities are described below.

Activities

Activity 1

Students were provided with a choice of one of five well-known fairy tales (see Table 10.1.1). After a brief whole-class summary of each tale, students were instructed to adapt the context of the fairy tale to a different context.

Fairy tale	Instructions
The Three Little Pigs	Tell the story as if it were the transmission of a football match.
Snow White	Snow White has just received an Oscar. Write her acceptance speech.
The Ugly Duckling	The Ugly Duckling tells his story to his psychiatrist.
Hansel and Gretel	Hansel and Gretel are being tried for murder.
Little Red Riding Hood	Prepare a news report for the late evening news.

Table 10.1.1: Task options for Activity 1 (designed by Professor Dolores Rodríguez Melchor)

Students were given time to carry out research regarding the target text type, for instance sports commentary and its characteristics. Once they had assembled their list of characteristics (fast pace, long drawn-out shouting of 'Goooooooaaaaal', technical language and so forth), they were asked to write a script for a three-minute oral delivery of their fairy tale in the new format, to be given first in small groups, then to the whole class.

Activity 2

This consisted of a process writing activity carried out over a period of three weeks. Students were introduced to Joseph Campbell's (2003) monomyth theory and his 'Hero's journey' model in a multimodal format (teacher explanation, TED-Ed video, analysis of a sample text) and were then asked to write a 1,000-word creative story with a partner, following Campbell's model. During this writing experience, genre characteristics such as narrative, setting, point of view, contrast, intrigue and so forth were introduced and practised. In the present case, standard story cubes were used to give students guidance; however, these can easily be substituted with tailor-made

cubes for any given content subject.

Conclusion

Both activities resulted in students retaining theoretical concepts well and were motivating enough for them to produce considerably more text than required. The teaching experiences described have not yet been systematically included in lesson planning and will certainly require further research to firmly establish their specific effect on learning outcomes. However, even at this early stage, their positive effect on student motivation could be perceived, and a wide field of applications in the world of EMI can be discerned. In conclusion, creating a narrative for EMI subjects contributes to a more meaningful and motivating delivery of complex content in an L2 environment.

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10.2 Teaching Business English through fiction

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Fiction *vs* nonfiction

The use of authentic materials in teaching Business English (BE) is of immense importance nowadays. Teachers supplement coursebooks with nonfiction texts and videos from *The Economist*, TED Talks, the World Economic Forum, and so on. Still less conventional approaches could generate some of the most memorable and inspiring lessons on leadership, entrepreneurship and even finance. Using fiction to enhance students' reading and analytical skills can become a valuable component of any BE course in both business and academic teaching contexts.

The pedagogical value of literature for business students and individuals in business has been discussed by many scholars. It is argued that literature fulfils an enlightening function, it can teach business students and train and equip business managers: according to Younkins (2016: 15), 'Works of fiction can address a range of issues and topics, provide detailed real-life descriptions of the organized contexts in which workers find themselves, and tell interesting, engaging, and memorable stories.'

Business fiction

A wide variety of books that portray and discuss business activities and fictional business persons can be offered to BE learners. The examples of novels by British and American writers related to business situations and vocabulary include *Financier* by Theodor Dreiser, *The Moneychangers* by Arthur Hailey, *Something Happened* by Joseph