

Goal

1) To become more relaxed and practiced in my own storytelling abilities while at the same time giving the grade 7s some opportunities to do some storytelling of their own.

2) I think class unity and respect can be built through the sharing of each other's personal stories.

Intended grade group Grade 7s

One of our grade 7 teachers wanted to do a project with the grade 7's centering on scary stories. I thought that the unit was a great one for introducing storytelling to the group as well as getting them to do some creative writing, reading, and listening activities.

We initiated the unit with some dramatic readings of scary stories in class with the lights out. I used stories from Alvin Schwartz's, *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* and *More Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark*, as well as *Nasty Endings 1* by Dennis Pepper. The students were hooked partly because they were scared half to death and partly because everyone loves a good ghost story.

Next, I introduced a poem called *The Pocket* by Sean O'Huigan which has a weird but unidentified creature pulling a young person into a pocket. We used this poem to examine the author's very distinct style and to inspire some creative writing with a specific focus on describing the creature in the pocket. The students had to first imagine what the creature looked like in their minds and then had to write about it. The rubric for marking these came from the students themselves. It was as follows:

- Description of the creature (detail) 5 marks
- Figures of speech used (i.e. juicy language such as similes, metaphors, alliterations, etc.) 3 marks
- Traits and emotions 3 marks
- Does it make sense (grammar and semantics) 2 marks
- Mechanics (spelling, capitalization, punctuation) 2 marks ,
- Total: 15 marks.

The storytelling component is next to come. This will be initiated with a discussion about scars. I will ask how many of the students have scars knowing full well that everyone has a scar somewhere on their being. I will then tell the story of how I received a very long cut and thus scar (14 stitches long) on the crease of my right eye in a hockey accident. After this the students will share their “scar stories” with each other in small groups.

The next step in the process will be that I will tell the class a scary story from a personal experience that I had had as young adolescent. This will precipitate the students having to first think about a scary event in their lives and then they will get together in small groups and share their personal scary stories with each other. This will then lead to another writing activity where they share their experiences in their writing journal.

The final activity will evolve into the students first planning and then writing a short fictional scary story. A story planner board will be used for this activity. The scoring rubric will once again be determined by the students prior to the writing.