

Telling Tales: Supporting students to develop a literary voice and independent research skills through the re-working of fairytale

Figure 1

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Student cohort

- **Primary Education progression**
- **Core Foundation English**
- **Summative oral presentation**

Commentary

Annotated bibliography

Written copy of the oral presentation

Reflection of the task

Why use Folk/Fairy Tales?

Oral beginnings

Worldwide

**Literary fairytale: French- Charles Perrault
German- Grimm Brothers**

History of adaptations to the modern day

Student versions add to the body of work

Figure 3

Different Readings of the Tales

- **Historical**
- **Anthropological**
- **Marxist**
- **Feminist**
- **Symbolic**

Figure 4

Little Red Riding Hood

- **Different versions of the tale – endings**
- **What it may symbolise**
- **Modern day versions-
Carol Ann Duffy, Roald
Dahl, GHDs**

Figure 5

The Frog Prince

Figure 6

Look at the evolution of the tale in the Grimm's versions - sex out, but violence left in.



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Change of narrative voice – Stevie Smith

The Assignment

Oral Presentation - Instructions

- **An oral re-telling which changes our perception of the tale.**
- **Could change: the gender of the protagonist; the age in which the narrative is set; the outcome of the tale; a symbol item as appropriate.**
- **Avoid too much change or the tale becomes unrecognisable.**

The Assignment

Oral Presentation - Instructions

- **Could combine two tales.**
- **Remember, often tales have a magical element: animals and mirrors talk, people are transformed, carpets fly.**

The Assignment

Oral Presentation - Instructions

- **The protagonist is often the youngest child and is beautiful and caring. Frequent groups of three/seven/twelve.**
- **Bad people often get their just desserts - sometimes horrifically.**

Figure 8

Ways into the tales

Getting the students started in the creative process

- Childhood tales they liked or disliked
- Pictures
- Research inspired
- Modern examples- advertisements, films...

What the students did (A)

Student A

Told the story of *The Frog Prince* from the frog's point of view.

The student not only changed the narrative viewpoint to that of the frog, but he gave the backstory we don't get in the tale.

He also gave the frog insight into his plight and altered the character of the princess.

Figure 9

What the students did (B)

Student B

Found a fairly unknown tale *Godfather Death* which explores an interesting and taboo subject with children.

An exceptional and detailed presentation which brought to light an unusual tale and written totally IN VERSE!

What the students did (C)

Student C

Reversed the victim to the wolf in *Little Red Riding Hood* in a comical way.

The pair lure the wolf to grandmamma's cottage for their own evil plans...

Figure 10

What the students did (D)

Student D

Combined two tales - *Cinderella* with *The Little Match Girl*.

An average presentation which was rather short and showed little imagination.

However, this student presented well.

Findings – Commentary 1

The most interesting and revealing exercise undertaken during the research and writing.

“Anne Sexton had her own version of the talewhich inspired me to change the style of the tale to a poem and put it in first person format. Using rhyming couplets really made me have to think about the language used.”

Findings – Commentary 2

“Knowing when to stop and leave the story that I had written was something I found challenging! I kept going back to it tweaking here and there. My most harsh critics were the children in Year 4 at my placement-they gave me constructive criticism.”

Findings – Commentary 3

“If you start to look deeper into the tale I think it tries to portray that if you make a promise it has to be kept.....”

It also includes the idea of not overlooking something that you might not like, because it could end up being something you love, in other words, don’t judge a book by its cover.”

Findings – Reflections 1

This exercise, done after the task, was not as enlightening as expected. Cohort? My expectations?

“I feel my tale was too short and after listening to the others, I feel I could have written more and been more creative”

Findings – Reflections 2

“Overall I think that the project was fantastic in the sense that it allowed me to look at fairy tales in a way I had never done before. It has allowed me to learn a new skill, in that when I read them now I instinctively seek the deeper meaning, instead of taking them at face value”

Recap of Assignment: Scaffolding the Narrative

- **Think** about what tale to use weeks in advance
- Start **reading** the tales
- Give **examples** of different versions and explore how and why they are different
- Give examples of **academic** studies as starting points
- Give examples of how **other writers** have used fairytale

Ideas transferable to other disciplines

- **Could be used with any oral presentation**
- **Commentary on research showed students engagement with the task**
- **Task itself takes on more significance-holding an audience-particularly with Primary Ed students**
- **Reflection interesting for the students' future work.**

Illustrations

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