

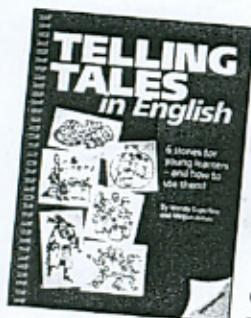


Edited by
Wayne Trotman

Materials reviews

Some of you may be lucky enough to be reading this month's reviews during the IATEFL conference in Liverpool. If you should spot any of our key reviewers there, please take the time to do as I am now doing: thank them for their energy and interest over the years.

For those like me - unable to attend the conference due to work commitments - well, there's always next year. Maybe I'll see you there. I hope so! [WT]



Telling Tales in English

Wendy Superfine and Megan James

Delta Publishing Ltd, 2003

ISBN 1 900783 49 5

Cassette: 1 900783 50 9

Judging by our addiction to soap operas, everyone loves a good story. This love predates TV and radio by thousands of years. Think of the Icelandic sagas or Homer's *Odyssey*. So what better way to motivate our learners than a story? The six stories in this book are traditional folk tales such as *The Pied Piper*. They may not all be familiar, but each one provides plenty of opportunity for repetition and recycling language plus the chance for children to get involved in the stories.

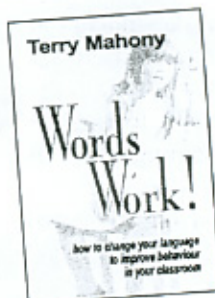
For each story there are notes, detailed lesson plans and photocopiable activity pages, along with lists of target structures and vocabulary for each lesson. Also included is the tapescript which gives the more confident teacher the opportunity to work without the cassette.

Some teachers still seem nervous about plunging into the magical world of story-telling (possibly due to uninformed administrators who feel they diverge from allegedly 'real teaching'). This book will support such reluctant teachers. For example, *The Old Woman who lived in a Bottle* practises all four skills and has a page of pictures to facilitate pre-teaching of vocabulary. These pictures may then be used for a listening and ordering task. Following this there is colouring, making a story-book, a word-search and listening puzzle and even the chance for students to draw their dream home. With writing and speaking included here the end result is superb integrated-skills activities.

Illustrations are large and clear with plenty of opportunities to cut and paste. *The Leopard's Drum*, for example, involves simple puppet making. Stories will appeal to children since the learning remains relatively effortless and derives from the context. This is an excellent addition to the lengthening shelf of resource books from Delta.

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Words Work

Terry Mahony

Crown House Publishing, 2003

ISBN 189983698 5

I am always pleased to be asked to review a book which is written for teachers generally, not just my own branch of TESOL/TEFL, as it gives a chance to see what people are up to in the wider world of teaching. The premise of this title is that we can become better teachers by becoming aware of the linguistic patterns we use while teaching and using them effectively. An attractive idea, seeing that what we say is one of the things we *do* have control over.

This book is divided into four sections, entitled, 'What am I going to learn?' 'Why should I learn this?', 'Just how do I do this?' and 'What can I do with this learning?' Section one contains a useful introduction to neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), which is the basis of the book. As someone currently experiencing discipline problems (as many of us perhaps are!), I was interested in the section on 'Misbehaviour strategy and teacher interventions', in section two. The solution, according to Mahony is 'circle time' where 'the teacher can model the desired behaviour' and give opportunities for children 'to practise with positive reinforcement', which sounds to me a bit like dog training, although there is allowance for 'children to express their opinions and be listened to'.

Section three tells us how to change our speech patterns, and the benefits to be gained from this, such as using language to improve your relationships with students by, for example, reframing statements to soften them and offering students a choice instead of commands. I found this the most useful section of the book. Finally, in the last section called 'putting it all together', we are given some ways to use what we have learnt in the form of some experiments, for example, reframing a colleague's 'moan' in a positive way. However, we are warned not to over-do this!

This is an attractively produced book with lots of clear tables, cartoons and diagrams, written by a well-qualified person. However, just how much real use it is in the classroom will depend very much on individual teachers' openness to new ideas. As it says in the introduction 'if we shun "failure" by taking no risks, we run the real risk of forgetting how to learn.'

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