**Sample activities from steps 2 & 5 of Storytelling Workshop**

**Step 2 General Storytelling Warm-up Activities**

Jon explains that as folk tales have been told through different generations, tellers have each told them in their own particular manner. There is not one way to tell them. So, students should feel free to tell them in a way that suits each one individually. These exercises help students understand that they already tell stories in their daily lives, so they should not be intimidated by the idea of telling traditional folk tales.

1. Telling personal or family stories – Students use prompts to tell a real or fictitious anecdote about something that has happened to them, or their feelings about a person or place.

(www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/2018/11/01/creative-storytelling-classroom-activity/)

a. Jon &/or teacher tell a real and a fictious anecdote about themselves, and students have to guess which is real and which is made up.

b. Students use a sheet of prompts to generate a very short story. They write down some

notes and practice it in their minds. Some examples of prompts could be:

i. Something funny or scary that happened to you or someone you know

ii. A time you were very late or you got lost

iii. An interesting relative

iv. A time when your family moved

c. Students swap their anecdotes with several different partners.

d. At end students can share about their story or a partner’s story with the class.

1. Students prepare a joke or riddle and tell it to the class. It’s best if it is in some kind of narrative form, but it could also be a knock-knock joke or “What do call a \_\_\_ that \_\_\_\_\_?
2. Have students retell a story in pieces as a group. (From *The Storyteller’s Start-Up Book*, Margaret Read MacDonald)
   1. Jon/ teacher tells a story to the class.
   2. Jon helps students review what happened. They make a very simple story map on the board, breaking it down into parts.
   3. Form students into groups & give them an order of telling within their group.
   4. Students each tell a portion of the story. Jon/teacher calls “Change” every few minutes, and the next student takes up where the previous student stopped.
3. Story bag - Prepare some story bags of 3-5 objects, and have groups make up a story connecting at least 3 of them. Alternately, you could use some pictures you have cut out of magazines. (From *Children Tell Stories: Teaching and Using Storytelling in the Classroom*, by Martha Hamilton & Mitch Weiss)

**Step 5 Specific Skill Exercises**

**Facial & body expression –** (1 & 3 are from *Children Tell Stories*, by Hamilton & Weiss. 2 is from *Our Stories Connect*, edited by Paula B Weiss)

1. Pantomime cards:

a. Divide class in two groups. Jon & teacher act out a pantomime with their groups, and students guess what it is.

b. Each student gets a card with an action to act out, then THE group guesses what it is.

Examples: Drinking a cold, refreshing drink on a hot day; trying to avoid a bee that’s buzzing around you head; eating spaghetti that keeps slipping off your fork.

c. You can expand this by going around AGAIN and asking the same or other student to expand on the pantomime by adding some emotion or some additional complication.

1. The magic ball –Students stand in a circle. One student creates an imaginary ball, then pulls and shapes into a useful object, and, finally, pantomimes using it in some way. Others guess what the object is. The object is “rolled back” into an imaginary ball and tossed to another student, who continues the game.
2. Pass the face – Everyone sits in a circle. Jon or teacher makes a face and shows it to everyone. The person next to them copies the face and shows it, then creates a new facial expression and passes it to the next person.

**Vocal exercises -** (6 is from *Our Stories Connect*, ed Weiss. All others from *Children Tell Stories*, by Hamilton & Weiss)

1. Saying, ”Oh” with expression. – Jon or teacher says a phrase that carries a lot of emotion, then have students follow by saying “oh” in a manner that matches. For example,
   1. How beautiful!
   2. How disgusting!
   3. I’m so sorry.
   4. That’s not important.
2. Counting from 1 to 10 – Students in different groups count from 1 to 10 according to different situations described on prompting cards;
   1. As if you’re an angry parent telling your child that, “I’m going to count from 1 to 10, and if you’re not in your bedroom by 10, you’re in big trouble!”
   2. As a toddler just learning how to count.
   3. As if you were sad because you thought everyone had forgotten your birthday, but then you walk into your living room and see ten birthday presents sitting on the floor.
   4. As if you’re a referee in a boxing match and you’re counting someone out.
   5. As if you are trying to remember yen things you have to do.
3. Deep breathing exercises
4. Tongue twisters to emphasize clear articulation
   1. Sylvia slurped soup sloppily.
   2. Which wristwatches are Swiss wristwatches?
   3. Three free throws
5. Word emphasis – Students in two groups (with Jon or teacher) trying saying phrases emphasizing a key word of their choice. Others respond by explaining what that emphasis was communicating. Example sentences:
   1. Is Jonathan flying to Florida this winter?
   2. Did Dad give Sue a new car?
6. Exploring the use of pauses in performance. Pauses help interpret a story, provide variety in pacing, and give the audience a chance to catch up with the teller. Hand out a fairly lengthy written sentence, then invite individual students to try saying it without pause and then with pauses in particular places of their choice.
   1. An example sentence could be: “I was alone late at night in the house. I heard something pound at the window. Cautiously, I approached, and there, staring at me was a horse.”
7. Narrative to dialogue:
   1. Give an example of a descriptive sentence turned into dialogue:
      1. Description: He asked his mother to let him go, but she refused.
      2. Dialogue: He said, “C’mon, Mom. I really want to go to this. Everyone else is going.”

“I’m sorry,” she said. “I can’t afford it, and you know I’m too buy to take you there.”

* 1. Give sample sentences to pairs of students and instruct them to convert them into dialogue.

**Other skills explored and addressed:**

1. Putting yourself emotionally inside the story.
2. Opening & closing the story with clarity and assuredness.
3. Avoiding nervous movements.
4. Making eye contact with the audience.
5. Varying vocal volume and pitch. Speaking loudly enough.
6. Varying your pace.