Creating Empathy in the Classroom

Presented by Dr. Dawn Duncan, Narrative 4 Master Practitioner
Concordia College-Moorhead, MN

www.narrative4.com
Familiarize yourself with Narrative 4 mission and focus
Recognize the potential for change—science and social sciences
Gain appreciation for the role of literature in setting up the process
Understand the Narrative 4 story exchange process
Recognize successes with exchanges focused on immigration
Identify classroom uses
Imagine the possibilities for use in your work with students
Motto, Mission, and Vision

- **Motto:** *Share today. Change tomorrow.*
- **Mission:** Narrative 4 harnesses the power of the story exchange to equip and embolden young adults to improve their lives, communities and the world.
- **Core themes:** Immigration, Violence, Faith, Identity, & Environment
- **Vision:** A world where young adults lead with empathy

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What is Empathy?
My father is in the kitchen making a morning cup of tea, singing a song he first heard when he was a schoolboy, when both he and Pakistan were full of possibility.

He claims his memory is failing, but the song rolls off his tongue with such ease I can’t help imagine him suddenly transported back in time when Indian films could ignore history and dwell on simpler things, like love.

When my father’s song goes quiet, I pretend his silence is due to forgetfulness. I fail to realize that his eyes have fallen through the dark bubbling surface of the tea and found for just a moment the face of his father, a man who long ago taught my father this song, sang it every morning until the day he disappeared.

--by Faisal Mohyuddin
4 Elements of Empathy

See Their World

Appreciate Them as Human Beings

Judgement

Communicate Understanding

Understand Feelings

cc Michael Sahota 2012
Science of the Brain

- Gazing at/listening to another for several minutes activates empathic channels of brain
- Study by Wehbe et al. reveals parts of brain active during engaged reading includes areas associated with perception of emotions, recognition, attention, etc
- Extended narrative encounter, which includes the gaze/listening, improves brain function and capacity for empathy

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Story Exchange Process

- Introduction to process, short readings, modeling
- Partners paired and stories shared (5-10 minutes per person): active listening
- Visualization: time apart to visually implant partner’s story (storyboard, collage, drawing, whatever helps)
- Exchange circles—stories exchanged, with each telling the other’s in first person, a privilege and responsibility, an act of generosity between all
- Reflection—how it felt, what has been gained, what next, Q&A
- Evaluation—assessing the learning and growth

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Analysis of Post Exchange 2018 Evaluations

- **Narrative 4 Concordia**
  - 74% post exchange increase in perspective
  - 94% post exchange increase in empathy
  - 88% post exchange motivation towards action

- **Narrative 4 International**
  - 75.76% post exchange increase in perspective
  - 85.25% post exchange increase in empathy
  - 80.09% post exchange motivation towards action
Uses of Narrative 4 in the Classroom: Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

- Writing
- Literature
- History/Social Studies
- Political Science/Civics
- Sociology
- Psychology
- Art
- Theatre
- Music
Framework for Exchange in the Classroom

- Decide upon your overarching goal(s) and the learning outcomes you want students to achieve
- Establish time frame: 1-2 days, 3 days, a unit
- Introduction: Explanation of story, modeling, literature selection(s) [during class]
- Pre-activities: initial writing/visualization/object collection [homework]
- Pairing & sharing: oral (deep listening & note-taking) [during class]
- Visualization: embedding the story [homework]
- Exchange circles, followed by group reflection, rubric evaluation [during class]
- Reflection, revision, evaluation: based upon experience, re-write own story and journal about learning empathy for others from their stories [homework]
Examples of Lighter Prompts

▸ Tell a story about...
  ▸ The first time I ever...
  ▸ What this object means to me (can be rolled into specific theme)
  ▸ The best leader or kindest person I have ever known
  ▸ The clumsiest thing I ever...
Examples of More Serious Prompts

- Tell a story about when you came to know a person from another country or of another faith than you. What were the circumstances of your meeting and coming to know one another? What did you learn from this encounter/relationship?

- Tell a story about when you felt left out, marginalized, or even oppressed. How did you get through this experience?

- Communities can be based on many connections—faith, ethnicity, neighborhood, nation, etc. Tell a personal story that for you represents the best qualities of living in community with others.
If you are interested, next steps...

- Join Narrative 4 online for access to much more information: https://narrative4.com/
- Decide whether you want an N4 team member to come to your school/class to...
  - Train teachers to facilitate exchanges
  - Facilitate a school or program/class exchange
- Contact Kandice Cole, Program Associate, with your request: kandice@narrative4.com
- Further questions for Dawn Duncan, email to: duncan@cord.edu
Narrative 4 Concordia, July 2017-June 2018

- 12 Story Exchanges = total of 237 participants
- 10 Presentations to total of 482 audience members (community, colleges, conferences)
- 4 Facilitator Training Sessions = total of 42 participants
- December celebration hosted: 102 who had participated (ages 10-70, complete diversity of peoples)
Thank You!
Time for Q&A

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