Storyline

Storyline:

A Creative Approach to Learning and Teaching

Edited by

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and Marie Jeanne McNaughton

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A Word from the Editors

Story making and storytelling are fundamental human activities. All cultures include stories that explore and communicate traditions, values and universal themes, often through the use of allegory and symbolism. A story can entertain, but it can also inform, illustrate abstract concepts and help to covey the complexity of human action and relationships. It can also be, for example, a medium for developing skills and making connections, a means of social and cultural bonding and of sharing culture and belief systems, or a way of sharing in common human experiences, often by uniting both the cognitive and the affective domains. Moon (2010: 96) states that stories "…can tap into the imagination and emotions and form new and meaningful connections between existing areas of knowledge that can be neglected in conventional practice." The premise of this book is that the Storyline approach can provide educators and learners with creative, meaningful and powerful educational experiences.

The power and potential of stories in learning has been recognised by Storyline practitioners since the 1960s. As can be seen from the scope and variety of contributions to this new Storyline book, educators from across the world continue to employ the pedagogies and strategies of Storyline to complement and extend the educational opportunities they offer to the learners in their care. This book is the result of the extending and crafting of some of the presentations and ideas offered by delegates at the 5th International Storyline Conference in Reykjavik in 2012.

The book is divided into four main sections. In Part I the scene is set and Storyline is examined in the context of past and current pedagogical theory and practice. Jón Torfi Jónasson makes connections between the past and present and future of education and suggests that stories, and Storyline in particular, fit with many of the demands of education for the 21st century. Steve Bell and Sallie Harkness trace Storyline from its beginnings in Glasgow schools, and Jordanhill College, to its present and growing international status as a practical yet robust learner-centred approach to education. Further chapters go on to look at addressing learner motivation, active learning and meeting the needs of every learner through the Storyline approach. Finally, Ulf Schwanke and Rebecca Plaskitt address some of the issues raised by Storyline sceptics, and demonstrate that effective pedagogy demands time and effort from both learners and

teachers. Part II of the book presents a series of examples of how Storyline has been used successfully in a range of learning and teaching situations. Subjects of learning range from nurturing the spirit of the child, to Global Citizenship and Environmental Education, through to Arts, Language and Science, and ending up looking, literally, at matters of life and death. It is clear that there is no aspect of learning that a creative and well-prepared teacher cannot address through Storyline.

Part III of the book examines Storyline in the foreign language classroom, starting with Doris Kocher placing Storyline in the context of Task-based Language Teaching. There follow chapters on Storyline in different foreign language teaching contexts from Russia to Brazil, and on Storyline for working on different language skills. Part IV of the book focuses on Storyline in adult education. Cecilie Falkenberg discusses Storyline's applicability to this area. Subsequent chapters look at Storyline in a variety of adult education contexts.

As editors, we hope that you will find the contents of this book both interesting and inspiring. We wish you happy reading, and happy Storyline-ing.

Peter J. Mitchell and Marie Jeanne McNaughton

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PART I:

PLACING STORYLINE IN CONTEXT

CHAPTER ONE

CONNECTING THE PAST, PRESENT
AND THE FUTURE:
A STORY ABOUT THE TRAVEL
OF EDUCATION THROUGH TIME

JÓN TORFI JÓNASSON

Storyline—an inspiration

Preparing for the keynote at the Storyline conference in Iceland in 2012, I was inspired by the ideas promoted by the Storyline teachers in two ways. Firstly, by the very powerful notion that education is about a holistic understanding of the world, particularly well expressed by the idea of telling a story. Secondly, by the notion that education demands the full co-operation and interaction between the teacher and the student where the former facilitates in an open but disciplined way the education of the latter. Thus I was inspired to tell the following story at the heart of which is education as both an idea and as a practice that fits particularly well with the ideas and practices of Storyline.

When looking back at education as an institution throughout the centuries it is very difficult to determine if it has changed much—but this depends of course on what aspects of education we think are important and what we consider to be substantial change. Perhaps everything related to the world, including education, has changed so much that it is practically a waste of time to consider its history—or, on the contrary, it could be that what we think is most essential has not changed very much and therefore we can perhaps adopt some of the aims, form or content of education from previous centuries. For example, given our current emphasis on reading or literacy and the way we organise our classrooms, and given the way we conduct much of modern teaching, it seems that time-honoured aims, content and methods stand the test of time remarkably well. On the other

hand, when we consider the tremendous advances in the production of knowledge, particularly noticeable in science and technology, and also the open instantaneous access to much of this knowledge in addition to the technological toolboxes opened up by computer technology, it seems that we have little in common with past centuries.

In an attempt to discern between the old and the new of our educational edifice I will recount a story of some aspects of the development of Western education through the centuries. At no stage will I, however, apologise for the glaring and constant oversimplification nor for the lack of underpinning and examples, which would hide the thread and the message through tedium and name-dropping. I still think this kind of an account is exceedingly important and may help us to decide what is most valuable in our current conduct of education and how we may intelligently and fruitfully think about the future of education.

One of the early Plato dialogues, *Menon*, opens with the question, put by Menon:

> "Can you tell me, Socrates, whether virtue is acquired by teaching or by practice; or if neither by teaching nor practice, then whether it comes to man by nature, or in what other way?"

The remainder of this text elaborates on this and related issues from different angles. Several parts of the dialogue inspire reflection on the nature, content and conduct of education. It was certainly accepted by the Greeks that virtue was of highest importance, but the question was, if it could be taught at all, and if so, who would have the credibility or competence to teach it and also when and how. Socrates, worthy of his reputation, shows that the matter is not as simple as it appeared to Menon at first sight, but the general tenor of the discourse was nevertheless that if virtue could be taught, it should be. Their conclusion was that it could not, but the matter did not close then: it has been with us since in many guises. The general question is what can be taught and what is within the purview of education or the school system.

Some fundamental questions of education are raised in the dialogue, if only in a general way. Firstly, what content or which values would call for an educational process and, secondly, who might be the teachers and what should be their credentials for making them credible teachers of virtue or whatever they purported to teach.

The process of disentangling these issues in the *Menon* is an example of the best known educational idea of all times, i.e. what is often called the Socratic discourse or method, emphasised by the content of this and other dialogues of Plato, but very pointedly by an example, also in the *Menon*,

where Socrates decides to teach the boy slave the exact length of the diagonal of a square. In the process Socrates notes, "Do you observe, Menon, that I am not teaching the boy anything, but only asking him questions...?"

It further becomes a very important part of the process to clarify what the learner knows and what he does not in order to produce the preconditions for learning. The underlying idea is that one does not have any reason or motivation to learn something that one already thinks one knows and, as Socrates notes, "But do you suppose that he would ever have enquired into or learned what he fancied that he knew, though he was really ignorant of it, until he had fallen into perplexity under the idea that he did not know, and had desired to know?" A crucial part of the method is to clarify what is known and what is not; the Socratic Method demands a sophisticated discipline. So does all good teaching.

In the heyday of ancient Greece there was already a lively discussion about education as an enterprise, in particular due to the endeavour of the Sophists, who offered systematic instruction for payment. This endeavour was criticised by Socrates and Plato, both for the methods being used (which seem to be kindred to what we would now call "traditional" methods of teaching) but also for some of the content that was on offer, such as the teaching of virtue and who would have the capacity for teaching it. A part of the discourse is taken further in the Republic, where Plato suggests a curriculum fit for the leaders of the State, repeatedly emphasising that education may be a necessary precondition for leadership, but by no means a sufficient one. Education does not guarantee the personal attributes that are absolutely essential for a first rate non-corruptible leader. But for all stages of schooling the curriculum suggested in the Republic had clear aims, ranging from the heroic stories and music, intended to mould the personality, to philosophy meant to steer the value judgements of potential leaders from worldly goods to non-material higher aspirations.

Note that the discussion is framed in a culture nearly 2500 years older than ours with, inter alia, completely different cultural norms, enormous class and gender differentiation, very different notions of the nature of knowledge and with no established system of education prior to this time. Nevertheless we find a remarkable affinity with the modern issues being discussed and the details of the lines of contention. And some of these need to be reiterated even in the 21st century.

What do we expect of education? It is sometimes thought that it has always been taken for granted that education as an enterprise was needed or was a rational undertaking. It is clear from the writings of the Greek

philosophers that the idea has been around for a long time but it is relatively recently that it has been assumed to be sensible and necessary for everybody. Similarly it is often assumed that the purpose of education has always been clear or uncontested. This is far from the truth and for a long time in educational history the principal tasks of education were taken to be different from what we think is the case today. Again it is sometimes assumed that a system of education catering for all children has always been in place; this is also far from being so, but now it is such an ingrained part of our modern society that instead of asking how we best implement our educational aspirations, we are nearer to asking how we might best utilise our system of education as if its existence or its rudimentary modus operandi could or should not be questioned.

We are not expected to question the basic tenets of our system. That is probably why the modern educational debate seems most of the time to be more about method than aims. We note, however, that these are partly related. The debate is sometimes framed by referring to who should be at the centre of education, the teacher (or the instructor) who transmits or delivers the already assembled and digested body of knowledge, or the student (the one who is supposed to learn or understand) who assimilates, extracts, internalises or constructs his own understanding. Having decided which perspective to adopt we can decide how to mould the process of education. Again, with hindsight, it can be inferred that this is a part of a very long-lasting debate. In the *Menon* Plato argues that the most sensible way of learning is through a reflective discourse where the teacher acts somewhat similarly to a midwife extracting the knowledge hidden in the student's mind (in keeping with Plato's theory of knowledge). He was thereby directly criticising the unidirectional dissemination of information and ideas seen to characterise the Sophist method. To all intents and purposes, his was the perspective originally accepted by Christian religious education, especially as expounded by St. Augustine (indeed under some Platonic influence). Later, this was partly contested by the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas, who revived in a formal way the instructional role of the teacher, even in matters of religion, while still retaining the reflection (meditatio) and questioning (disputatio) elements of the process of instruction as a part of his Scholastic method. The student-centred approach was again revived (repeatedly) during the Reformation with the insistence that every child, whether boy or girl, should be able to attain their own understanding and belief through their personal reading of the Bible. Therefore the text had to be in their own language, which they had to learn to read. Thus for the Protestant Christians, represented especially vigorously in Northern Europe, for

example by the Pietists, reading was a necessary instrument for becoming a true believer and this applied to all, high and low. Furthermore the written guide for achieving these aims was the Catechism, which was structured with questions and answers essentially based on a dialogue, which was intended to facilitate genuine understanding. Thus learning to read was a very important feature of a child- or student-centred approach to learning.

Somewhat later than the influence of the Protestant approach to religious education, was the influence of the Enlightenment, which spread throughout Europe and to the Americas, especially in the 18th century and onwards. The choice of the word is of particular significance: knowledge throws light on one's world, opens up new understanding, new horizons and has the potential to set individuals, communities and even nations free, in the sense that they are not kept at bay simply by their own ignorance. Knowledge throws light on things with the aid of reason and carries the potential of freedom of thought by severing chains of tradition. A very important manifestation of the importance of knowledge was the publication of the Encyclopaedia in the third quarter of the 18th century in France. This emphasis on knowledge with developments of printing gradually made books more available and accessible and underpinned the importance of reading, resonating very well with the Protestant emphasis on reading. But it is very important to note that the philosophers and scientists who inspired and led the 17th and 18th centuries' thought, saw knowledge and reason as tools for change whether it be related to the political regime or scientific understanding.

The aims of education

Throughout its long history, many different aims have been behind the idea of educating people, whether for the elite few or more recently for universal education. It is not the case that it has always been mainly or largely about the skills of reading and writing or amassing huge amounts of information or mastering skills for certain trades or the world of work more generally, even though these have practically always been present, notably in the liberal arts curriculum throughout the centuries. And even as reading and writing were prominent for long periods these were seen as tools for a fairly specific (if changing) purpose. Being able to read, while important, was not a goal in itself but rather a means towards a loftier end: reading Greek and Roman literature and history in order to acquire knowledge for rhetorical proficiency, as in Greek and Roman times; learning to read in order to read the languages of the classics, as

emphasised by the humanists: reading in order to enjoy the spirit of the classical minds as proposed by the neo-humanists: being able to read in your mother tongue, as emphasised by most protestant denominations, in order to develop your own personal religious belief; or reading to understand the world as advocated by the Enlightenment. This end changed and oscillated between various poles at various times, ranging from being able to argue a case, to becoming a more genuinely human, virtuous, or religious person, and to becoming free as a citizen and a knowledgeable human being. But there are problems with these ideas and not only related to the conceptual and feasible, questions already raised by Plato in the *Menon*. We will elaborate on two of them.

For a variety of religious, ideological and also quite pragmatic reasons, universal secular education was gradually implemented across much of Europe during the 17th and in particular the 18th century. This served the ideas of the Protestant demands for universal literacy and it also served the Enlightenment ideology emphasising education as a means to personal and social freedom. The problem here is that what motivated the authorities was very importantly the idea of social control; the freedom obtained had to be considerably controlled. Benavot and Resnik (2006: 22) propose that there was a "need to shape citizens' loyalty through the inculcation of ideologies of nationhood" as well as forming an educated elite, similar to what Napoleon had in mind for France at the beginning of the 19th century. It is quite clear that the ideas of universal education were essentially quite elitist, except perhaps for those advanced by the pious Protestants.

The other modulating factor is the development of a positivist ideology during the 19th century, which emphasised the importance of factual knowledge on the one hand, and its neutrality on the other. Facts were facts and these carried with them neither value judgements nor implication of application, for example, for political ends. And even though Romanticism and Neo-humanistic ideas in many ways superseded the Enlightenment ideas as characterising the philosophical debate in the 19th century, some version of the latter ideas gradually took control over the system of education. Now, reading and writing became primary goals, practically as ends in themselves, and similarly the acquisition of encyclopaedic knowledge came to the fore: knowledge was the key factor in the education of modern man, preferably knowledge that underpinned traditional values but non-critical and without any socially subversive undertones. New knowledge should be free of values.

Throughout its history, there has been a considerable interest in educational change and in a very important sense the battle lines were

already drawn in the criticism Plato levelled against the Sophists and the remedies, with reference to method, suggested in particular by the Socratic Method. The debate from early times was partly about aims but more concretely about method or approach, with less emphasis on content, even though these are, of course, closely related issues. It is difficult to classify the ideas or pleas for reform, but it seems that many of the ideas of early modernity pressed for moving the content of education from the classical academic world to the real world in which the young lived. The question about emphasis or aims has been present for a long time, where the tendency has always been to move towards the academic, whether this meant classical or liberal knowledge or encyclopaedic knowledge as in later times. Erasmus, like many of the humanists and later the neo-humanists, placed emphasis on fostering the human element through classical literature, whereas Montaigne and Vives placed more emphasis on relating education to real life, a note also struck by both Comenius and Rousseau. The latter, in book IV of *Emile*, emphasises that both personal and social development are very important educational aims. Pestalozzi proposed and organised education that would foster the head, the heart and the hand in his educational endeavours.

There was a particularly noteworthy educational development during the latter part of the 18th century, notably in Germany with the establishment of the Realschulen, i.e. schools with practical emphasis. The idea was that general education should have some relation to real life, especially practical industry and not be solely preoccupied with religious, classical or encyclopaedic knowledge. This can be seen as an important step in the direction of moving much of apprentice-based, vocational education into the school system during the 19th century. This may again be seen as the precursor to the later comprehensive ideal of general education, but even more importantly it relates to the idea of 'human capital' that was formalised within the field of education during the latter part of the 20th century, even though it had been implicit from much earlier times. These ideas gave the already established and highly developed systems of education a clear aim, an updated raison d'être: that of producing a competent work force. This is somewhat unfair to some of the proponents of kindred ideas; both Dewey and Kerschensteiner were interested in educating good (if critical) citizens who might also be prepared for the world of work.

As we move nearer to the 19th century and later into the 20th century, the focus becomes somewhat narrower, more on knowledge and skills, and consequently on the method of transmitting these. Given the culture of the school, moral issues do not perhaps belong there anymore. Grundtvig, a

devout Danish Christian and a passionate proponent of education, wrote a short piece just before the middle of the 19th century, where he asks if religious belief is really a school subject. Normally the newer ideas do not in fact question the general premises of the skill-based and enlightened general curriculum of the 19th century: the question is how it is inculcated into the children's minds. There are two sides to this coin, both simultaneously prominent in educational reform writings during the late 19th and 20th centuries. One is what we may call child-centred ideology, i.e. the need to respect the pupil as a person and a learner and to take into account his or her development and interests and physical and social environment. We see this much earlier in the writings of Rousseau, but also in Montessori's ideas, for example in her ideas on auto-education and particularly clearly in the title of Ellen Key's (1909) book *The Century of the Child* and in her emphasis on the personal development of each individual child. The other side relates to the interaction with the child, noting that knowledge or understanding must be built up gradually or constructed through somewhat individual interaction and personal action by the learner. The learner becomes an active participant in developing his or her gradual understanding. This is also emphasised by the problem-solving pedagogy advanced by Dewey and by a host of other reform-oriented progressive educators on both sides on the Atlantic. These ideas were in their essence revived in the 1960s also on both sides of the Atlantic, stimulated by Bruner and his associates with 'new' curricula and methods. It is remarkable how little vitality and vigour in educational change we have since witnessed at a global level.

The form of education

During most of the time under discussion education has been an elitist idea, i.e. something for the few, which makes it perhaps difficult to map the old ideas onto our present insistence of universal high quality education for all. The problem is partly a problem of logistics, because many of the old ideas require a personal teacher or rather a guide or a mentor who interacts on a personal basis with each and every pupil, such as in Rousseau's *Emile*. But it may also depend on the view people have on the aims and nature of education. This is not straightforward, however. Even though the aims are related to very personal characteristics or experiences it seems as if very direct and unilateral methods of transmission were sometimes adopted, whether by the Sophists while teaching virtue, by the Church while preaching religion to the masses or by the school systems trying to ensure personal mastery and understanding

of complex knowledge. And it perhaps worked, for some learners, some of the time. Even in settings where this approach was not tolerated, such as when the Catechism was explicitly established to ensure personal understanding and appropriation of the religious doctrines through an interactive simulation of questions and answers with the guidance and interrogation of both parents and priests, the result seems more often than not to have been very mechanistic rote learning of the texts in question.

But the modus operandi of 19th and 20th century education seems to be less of a problem if the aim is largely to transmit facts and then to master skills, such as reading and writing, which facilitate this. It seems that a great deal of such transmission can be accomplished in large classes. Two aspects of this are particularly noteworthy. The first is that it might have been thought that, with the development of the printing press, the character of education might have changed: texts could be read outside the classroom and the class time used more for working on the ideas and understanding in an interactive fashion. This was certainly the idea developed by Aquinas' four stages of instruction, assuming considerable work to be done by the student outside class and this is, of course, inherent in the idea of student homework where the students were expected to prepare for class. Homework was an important part of schooling where the material was meant to be read outside the classroom. But in spite of the enormous development of printing technology over many centuries, teaching that relied on written text did not change very much. Still, the old idea of using text or the spoken word as a means of preparing for class was revived at the beginning of the 21st century with the so-called "flipped classrooms", where the student is expected to do some well-defined work outside the classroom, thus enabling the teacher to concentrate on tasks that require some unique guidance or interaction. The second point to note relates to the notion that education is basically about transmission of information. Even if the aims of education are principally related to encyclopaedic knowledge, i.e. to the understanding of ideas and learning facts in the process, it requires the reflective engagement of the pupil and interaction with the environment (in particular the teacher) exactly as proposed by Socrates using the example of the length of the diagonal of the square he demonstrated in the *Menon*. Thus, even within the narrow confines of encyclopaedic understanding, the individual construction of knowledge afforded by the Socratic Method, or its siblings, is certainly called for.

Education and the future

In a paradoxical sense education is all about preparing for the future but this is notably done by concentrating on the past, i.e. using ideas, methods, content and values from our long-gone or recent history as the basis for what we do within the educational edifice. There are a number of good reasons for this: mainly that we know a lot about the past but happen not to know much about the future, or we convince ourselves that we do not, and we even think that in principle we cannot have such knowledge. But that would not be a fair claim about the future for at least two reasons. One is that the future is, in a sense, already here—a lot of what is going to be important to coming generations has already materialised, perhaps on a limited scale and is often not known to many. This is true for new cultures of work, new types of jobs, new technology, new scientific knowledge, new educational realities and new global challenges, all of which are already with us. The second reason why we know a fair bit about the future is that we can predict quite a lot about how all of these will change and develop in the next decades, even though there are important aspects of the future which we cannot foresee; and we also know that all of them will change considerably and at an increasing rate. The world has changed quite dramatically over the past few decades but will quite definitely change much more in the next few.

Partly explicit and partly implicit in the above story of education, is the claim that the current idea that the overarching task of education is the accumulation of important skills and value-free knowledge certainly has its roots in the long history of Western education regaining its dominance to a certain extent during the late 18th century, but mainly during the 19th and 20th centuries. At times, the ideas of social and individual virtues, humanistic, moral or liberal values and the role of education to ensure critical civic attitudes and the freedom of the human spirit seem to be constantly pushed to the side.

Among the most important messages of this story is to inspire a very long-term view of education and not to assume that lines drawn in the most recent centuries are necessarily the best guides to the future, either in terms of aims, content, or method. Nor should we assume that having such a solid system of education as our present system certainly is, must mean that it is or should be immutable from any of the three perspectives. In particular, we should ask if some of the previous important reasons given for the task of educating the young, pushed aside by the positivistic, human capital arguments taking centre stage during the recent past, might

be revived or at least pitted against the information- and skills-based curriculum of the present.

In the process of looking towards the future it is important to establish what the immutable features are within the educational edifice. Perhaps there are none. Not even the system of education itself. There were all sorts of pragmatic reasons why a system of (compulsory) education was a sensible step a few centuries back. Three seem to be particularly relevant, here. Firstly, there was the possibility to control the curriculum through a state-administered setup. Secondly, there was the economy of scale; given the size of the task, education would only be affordable with relatively few teachers engaged in educating many children. Thirdly, there was the division of labour, as it would make sense that some people would have the dedication, skills and competence to take on the task of instructing the young. But there are several additional reasons why a system was established. Given the idea of universal education, it makes sense to ensure that every child has the right to a good education irrespective of the parents' interest or means. It was also sensible to offer facilities for practising education gradually with some specific amenities to ensure that all subjects could be taught in the best circumstances possible. It also made sense to offer children the opportunity to interact with each other socially. But it is a moot question if education was ever meant to provide equality of opportunity as Illich (1976) thought was the intention or whenever that idea came into force.

It would be questionable if we, in modern times, turned the argument on its head, claiming that as we now have such a strong and robust system that might, however, have outlived some of its initial reasons for being, so some new reasons must be discovered in order to justify its existence. And even though the system is well equipped and powerful it may not have the capacity to cope with all the tasks we might now want it to tackle.

Even when some changes may seem reasonable in the view of changing times, new cultures or new tasks may not be all that easy to engineer. The stronger the traditions, and the more robust the system, the more difficult it is to change it. What can we learn about the future of education from this account?

The lessons learned from this story about the development of Western education are perhaps somewhat unexpected and counterintuitive. Given that the ideas about basic human virtues and the ideas about social values many of us cherish are remarkably kindred to what they were some two thousand years ago, and that we may still consider the analysis presented by Socrates and Plato as highly pertinent to our deliberations, we might conclude that the most important ideas about what education is for, might

not have changed all that much. But the current emphasis on skills, standards and testing tells us otherwise. On the other hand given the enormous changes in everyday cultures, especially with various technological developments over the past few hundred years, and the enormous knowledge explosion during the same period, we might have thought that the content, but especially the methods of educational practice, would have transformed beyond recognition. We would, again, be mistaken. I suggest that the ways in which we conduct education have changed remarkably little, given the opportunities and reasons for change, but the aims of education have changed most, perhaps without very good reasons. Perhaps it should be the other way around. The future invites, affords and sometimes demands quite dramatic changes in the way we conduct and think about education. And the story about the development of educational thinking should urge reconsideration of the aims and methods of education and give us the confidence to re-awaken some of the good ideas from our rich historical past—and to dismiss the lesser ones.

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CHAPTER TWO

STORYLINE:
FROM SMALL BEGINNINGS
TO STORYLINE INTERNATIONAL

STEVE BELL AND SALLIE HARKNESS

Introduction

First of all we wish to say how delighted we are that the 5th International Storyline Conference at the University of Iceland has resulted in this book. Most of the following chapters are based on papers presented in Reykjavik in August 2012. Our Icelandic hosts have played a very important part in the development of Storyline and this is an opportunity to thank them for the warmth of their welcome, the efficiency of their planning, and the successful delivery of the recent conference.

As readers of this book may not know much about the background and development of the Storyline approach we shall describe this, although more detailed versions can be found in several previous publications and especially in *Storyline—Past, Present and Future* (Bell, Harkness, and White, 2006) where the history of Storyline and how it is used in many educational settings is described in some depth.

Storyline emerged in response to a report titled *Primary Education in Scotland* (HMSO, 1965). This report recommended major curricular change in Scottish Primary Schools, suggesting more cross-curricular work and recognising that mother-tongue language teaching was basic to all subjects. It emphasised the importance of language in all its forms— listening and speaking, reading and writing. It highlighted the importance of aesthetic subjects in learning and introduced a new area of study entitled "environmental studies". Child-centred approaches, differentiation and group work were also recommended. Not surprisingly, these innovations were viewed with some apprehension by teaching staff. Teachers who had been trained to follow a highly structured course based

on textbooks suddenly felt de-skilled. What was this new focus called Environmental Studies that could not be a subject because it was made up of different subjects comprising history, geography and science? Perhaps it was a process or method of teaching? The majority of teachers felt that they needed help in the form of practical models, strategies and approaches which would make them feel more secure and help them implement the new requirements.

Jordanhill College of Education

Following the publication of the new curriculum guide there was an obvious demand for support and training from teachers and local education authorities. John A. Smith, at that time Vice Principal of Jordanhill College and also Head of the In-service Department, had the idea to free a small number of members of staff from working with pre-service students in order to work full-time supporting teachers in primary schools (Harrison, and Marker, 1996). In 1967, three lecturers were seconded for this purpose and they were encouraged to spend time identifying schools where new strategies could be developed in order to solve the problems created by the new proposals. The tutors quickly recognised the unique support that gave them the creative freedom to work in this way.

At this time, basic primary education in Scotland started for pupils at the age of 5 years and lasted for 7 years. In the early stages, primaries 1 and 2, when children were new to school and just starting to learn to read and write, it was not possible to rely on the use of textbooks. Teachers had to organise more active learning. Also in the 1960s the educational theories of Froebel, Montessori and John Dewey were recognised as important influences on teaching methods. Infant departments were highly regarded as being leaders in the area of creative and progressive education. It was to the early stages that the staff tutors looked for inspiration and support in their search for the best ways to implement the holistic ideas being recommended. Slowly, over a period of years, using the rich expertise of practising teachers and especially those working in the early stages, a way of working and a curricular design began to appear and a busy programme of workshop courses for teaching staff was organised and implemented mainly in schools and the emerging teachers' centres. During these courses that spanned a three-day period two tutors would work together taking the teachers attending through a topic or theme to demonstrate how to organise cross-curricular work. Topics tended to have their origin in the new environmental studies but they integrated much language work and depended on the expressive arts to explore and record

pupils' ideas. The approach departed from the traditional model of transmission of knowledge, instead posing key questions that encouraged pupils to develop thinking skills and to identify and solve problems. An important feature of the approach was the invention of characters—the people involved in the situations imagined by the pupils. In that way the staff tutor topics, as they were called at that time, gave opportunities to consider feelings as well as facts.

Many different topics were designed covering a variety of subjects and designed for different stages in the primary school. These were always field tested in schools before being introduced to teacher workshops. Demand for courses and topic material increased and the approach began to spread, not only throughout Scotland, but also in other countries as the staff tutors, Fred Rendell, team leader, Sallie Harkness and Steve Bell, were invited to work in schools operated by the Service Children's Education Authority. This took them to Army bases in Germany, Gibraltar and Hong Kong. The European Council of International Schools became interested and visits were paid to their schools in Belgium and Switzerland. The Scandinavian school system was early to involve itself in what seemed to be an approach that fitted extremely well into their very creative educational philosophy. Many courses were organised for teachers in Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Sweden, and later Finland.

An exchange arrangement between staff at Jordanhill College and the University of Hamburg led to close collaboration between members of the staff tutor team and the IPTS (Institute of Practice and Theory in Schools), the system for teacher training in Schleswig Holstein. Many of the courses there were supported by the British Council. Ulf Schwanke who took part in this exchange later published *Die Storyline-Methode* (Auer Verlag GmbH, Donauworth, 2005).

In 1986 Kathy Fifield, a Fulbright Scholar from Oregon, USA, spent a sabbatical year shadowing Steve Bell to make an in-depth study of the approach. Others followed in Kathy's footsteps, notably María Steingrímsdottír and Bjorg Eiriksdottír from Iceland where the approach was already being adopted and adapted for young learners by many Icelandic teachers, notably Rosa Eggertsdottír.

Jos Letschert, who later became Dr Jos Letschert, Professor of Curriculum Studies at Twente University in the Netherlands, played a very important part in the early development of Storyline, as did his wife Dr Beate Grabbe-Letschert who introduced Storyline to the Teacher Training Institute in Hamburg and had long experience of presenting Storyline courses in Schleswig-Holstein (Letschert, et al, 2006).

Storyline emerges

By this time it was clear that the staff tutor approach to curricular planning used the story structure, with its sequence, setting in time and place, characters and plot, to frame topic planning and to pose questions to which learners could respond with imagination and creativity; undertaking a range of work involving problem solving, practical research and enquiry. This supported further activities such as expressing ideas and knowledge through a wide variety of media—writing, drama, art etc. The story structure provides a supportive and engaging context for meaningful learning geared to the learners' interests and concerns, as well as supporting the curricular goals of the teacher. Developed initially for use in primary schools, Storyline has been shown to be adaptable to teaching at all stages of learning and in any subject area. Now it is widely used in foreign language teaching and in higher education and teacher training. It has also been linked to simulation exercises in business contexts and has proved to be an effective tool in the training of nurses and in other medical contexts.

Features of Storyline teaching and learning

There are a number of features and stages in the planning, teaching and learning of a Storyline. Not every Storyline incorporates every feature, but all adhere to the key principles and pedagogy underpinning the approach. The features include the following:

- The teacher starts with what the learners know by asking key questions.
- These are open questions that require imaginative and creative thinking.
- The questions have a sequence that forms the chapters of a story.
- Learners produce their answers in the form of conceptual models or hypotheses.
- They then test their hypotheses by questioning and research.
- A wide variety of techniques is used to explore and present their ideas including visualisation in two and three dimensions.
- Teachers use co-operative learning techniques and appropriate grouping.
- Visual work is displayed with care and respect.
- Teaching structures are employed which support success.
- Pupils' work is assessed in a relevant and constructive way.
- Self and peer evaluation are central to the process.

Thus, Storyline can be viewed as a shared experience between teacher and pupils, with the pupils able to participate actively in the learning processes.

The European Association for Educational Design (EED)

In 1988, during a Workshop Course at Thelamörk School in the north of Iceland directed by Gudmundur Kristmundsson, a meeting was held of topic enthusiasts from Iceland, the Netherlands and Scotland. Jos Letschert, who at that time was responsible for the primary education department in The SLO (Institute of Curriculum Development in the Netherlands), suggested that we should form the European Association for Educational Design in order to promote the Jordanhill staff tutors' approach. Unfortunately there was a problem! In Denmark the method was known as *Den Skotske Metode* and in Germany as *Die Methode Glasgow*. These titles did not convey an understanding of the nature of the approach and so the name 'Storyline' was agreed to solve that problem. This title makes it clear that the teacher holds the LINE (the teaching plan) while the learners have ownership of the STORY.

At this time also it was decided that a seminar should be organised every 18 months to bring together the leaders of Storyline from their various countries. One of the famous tours in Iceland is named the Golden Circle and this was the name that we chose for our new group. The first meeting of the Golden Circle / EED was hosted by Jos Letschert in his Institute in Enschede in 1989. It was attended by 12 educators from Iceland, Scotland, Denmark and the Netherlands.

A mission statement for the EED was designed during a workshop in Denmark led by Kirsten Meldgaard. It read: "The European Association for Educational Design is an organisation supporting the development of the Storyline approach in a critical and innovative way by sharing on-going research, resources, curriculum development and applications of the method. The Golden Circle is a non-competitive forum for enquiry into theory and practice to promote professionalism and friendship".

To celebrate the millennium, the Golden Circle agreed that it was time for the 1st International Storyline Conference. This was organised by Cecilie Falkenberg, of Laererhojskole Danmark, and was held in Aalborg in 2000. The conference coincided with the publication of *Storylinebogen —en handbog for undervisere* (Falkenberg and Hakonsson, Kroghs Forlag A/S 2000). Cecilie also organised the 2nd conference in Elsinore, Denmark in 2003. In 2006, Strathclyde University hosted the 3rd event in Glasgow, Scotland. In 2009, Jeff Creswell of Storyline Design in

collaboration with Portland State University organised the 4th conference and the University of Iceland welcomed Storyliners to Reykjavik for the 5th conference in 2012. In 2015, we returned to Glasgow where our hosts were Glasgow City Council Education Services and the University of Strathclyde.

Since that first Golden Circle meeting in the Netherlands there have been 18 seminars in various countries and the EED continued in this form until August 2009. By that time Storyline Design in Oregon, USA, founded by Kathy Fifield and since her untimely death in 1994 led by her close friend and teaching colleague Jeff Creswell, had been involved in organising programmes of courses and especially summer courses, many involving Sallie Harkness and Steve Bell. As mentioned above Jeff Creswell and his colleagues at Portland State University hosted the 4th International Storyline Conference. This was followed by the 16th Golden Circle Seminar when a new title was agreed by the expanding group. No longer could it be called the EUROPEAN association because now Storyline had many followers in the USA and beyond. So it was renamed Storyline International.

In August 2012, Jeff Creswell was appointed chairman of Storyline International and he is now responsible for organising future seminars with the help of a small international board.

As survivors of the original Jordanhill staff tutor team it gives us great pleasure to know that the small group of 12 educators from 4 countries who met in Holland in 1989 has grown to be 45 representatives from 15 countries and that the seminar now includes teachers from all stages of the school, head teachers, foreign language teachers, lecturers, professors, a medical researcher and a priest.

Masters and doctorates

In recent years an increasing number of students have been including Storyline in their research projects for masters and doctoral studies. Early in this field was Bjorg Eiriksdottír who took her Masters at the University of Strathclyde and Mait Adegard with her Masters in the University of London. Also Rosa Eggertsdottír who studied in Cambridge. Rhonda Mitchell-Barrett was awarded her EdD at the University of Durham; Wendy Emo, Minnesota State University, USA, took her doctorate in the University of York, England; Sharon Ahlquist, Kristianstad University, Sweden, studied for her EdD at the University of Leicester, England, and Ifigenia Iliopoulous at the University of Volos, Greece. Several doctoral students in Turkey, Iran and Russia all have work in progress.