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# Teaching through Stories:
## The Storyline Approach in Teacher Education

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### Renewing the Scottish Storyline Approach in Teacher Education
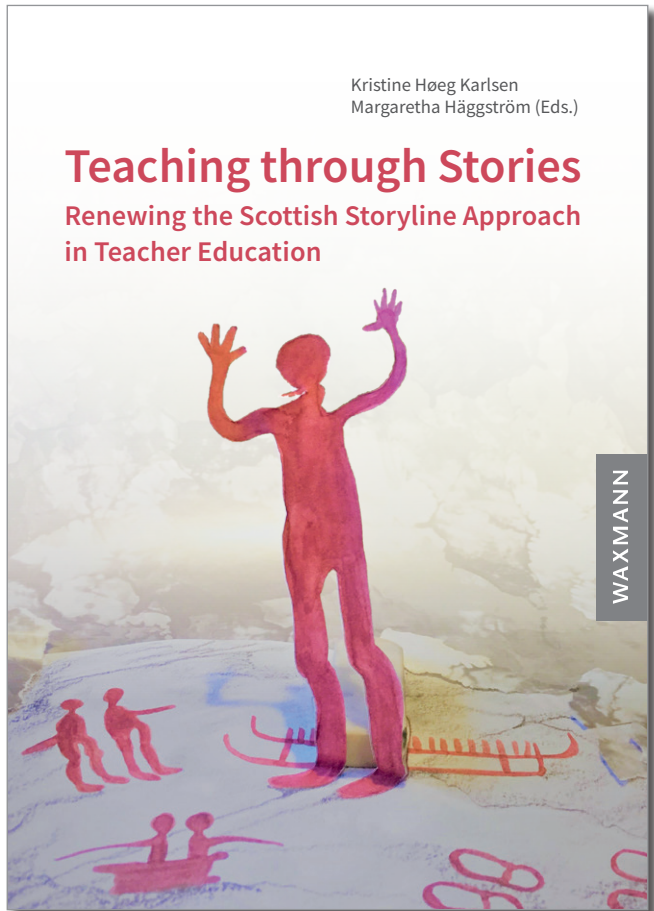
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*Kristine Høeg Karlsen and Margaretha Häggström*



Credits: Kristine Høeg Karlsen

## Introduction

Globally, crucial efforts are being made to develop, change and transform education to meet the demands of the internationalised cultures and policies of the twenty-first century. As educators prepare their school children to respond to the challenges and possibilities of globalisation, mobility, environmental and social issues, and an insecure future, they also have to simultaneously interact with these entangled processes themselves. Educational policies and structures are influenced by globalised values, principles and ideals and have led to changed curricula in many countries. New curricula require new pedagogy which in turn creates new demands on teachers and learners. Educational systems, teachers and learners, need to be accustomed to the key concept of life-long learning. New skills have been for quite a while – and still are – required for new ways of managing pupils, teaching and learning situations, material and resources and school systems. Teacher education plays an essential role in transforming pedagogical approaches and methods and equipping prospective teachers with 21st century skills, but have been criticised for a lack of connection between theory and practice, evident in different parts of the world (Hennissen, Beckers, & Moerkerke, 2017; Marcondes, Leite, & Ramos, 2017; Peercy & Troyan, 2017), including the countries in Scandinavia (Hennissen et al., 2017; Häggström & Udén, 2018; Korthagen, 2010; Rönnerman & Salo, 2012). Eriksen, Larsen, and Leming (2015) claim that teacher education benefits from the potency of various disciplines while applying interdisciplinary methodologies in teaching and learning processes. The use of reflective practice helps student teachers

to make connections between theory and practice, they suggest. This can be conducted through practice-based experience when student teachers attend school-based training courses where students are given the opportunity to integrate pedagogical theories with their own experience of teaching as a teacher. Through reflective practice, students may develop an awareness of various teaching and learning approaches. To achieve this, Eriksen et al. (2015) argue, students need to be capable of decoding their pupils' motivation and to act accordingly, hence, to use their own reflections to meet the needs of their pupils.

One starting point to promote reflective practice and to make connections between theory and practice and simultaneously provide a throughout pedagogical approach, including a creative student-centred pedagogy, is to implement The Storyline Approach (TSA[1]) in teacher education. This was highlighted at the 7th International Storyline Conference, *Storyline – The next generation* (2018) in Ljubljana, Slovenia, where researchers put teacher education on the agenda for preparing student teachers for the future professional practices and for teaching 21st century skills (Happstadius & Udén, 2018; Karlsen, Lockhart-Pedersen, Bjørnstad, & Høeg, 2018; Murray, 2018). There are many reasons for furthering Storyline as a pedagogical approach that includes a variety of didactic tools into teacher education; the vigorous and flexible nature of the approach, inclusiveness towards different learners, cultivating students' creativity and imagination, the recognition and acceptance of feeling as an essential part of learning processes, to mention a few. The application of TSA, based on an open structural design, can thus provide teacher educators with an alternative framework allowing for (and enabling) interdisciplinary collaboration and topic-based teaching across various teacher-teams and disciplines. Cooperation among colleagues is an essential prerequisite for success in cross-curricular teaching and learning, and such teaching will give one more opportunity to better equip student teachers to develop skills for the 21st century.

Through a theoretic discussion, this chapter aims to contribute comprehensive knowledge related to core aspects of TSA with teacher education as the context. TSA relies on the premise that stories support meaning-making processes, something that according to Mitchell and McNaughton (2016) "has been recognised by Storyline practitioners since the 1960s" (p. ix). This being the case, there have however been few attempts to elaborate on how theoretical concepts of story relate to meaning-making processes in TSA. To explore this, we see several approaches to unpack this relationship. One approach is to consider story telling as a fundamental activity in human experience. To elaborate and deepen the understanding and meaning of using stories in teaching, we rely on Carr's (1991) hermeneutic and transcendental view. Nevertheless, when stories are fundamental, then *everything* is a story, and for our purpose, to understand Storyline as an approach to teaching, we thus need a second approach; to borrow concepts from the text analytic perspective of narratology. It has to be said that, it *can* be problematic to *use* text analytical concepts from narratology to describe how to plan, structure and implement Storylines because they have been devised for other purposes, to analyse and not produce narrative texts. Still, we believe that such concepts are useful

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1    TSA is an abbreviation introduced by Karlsen, Lockhart-Pedersen & Bjørnstad (2019)

when understanding TSA, as they bring analytical clarity to Storyline as a practice of teaching. In the chapter, we have decided to also build on Bal's (1997) text analytical concepts, to discuss pedagogical and organising features of TSA.

The chapter has three different parts. By relating concepts of story to a meaning-making processes, the first part aims to elaborate and deepen the understanding of Storyline as an approach to teaching. Thereafter, obstacles and keys to effective use of stories in TSA within Teacher Education will be discussed, before the presentation of the content and organisation of the anthology, complete the chapter.

## Making sense through the use of story

TSA, is a problem-based, cross-curricular and topic-based approach that focuses on (and contextualises) teaching and learning through an advancing narrative (Bell & Harkness, 2013). In the literature on Storyline, the use of *stories* is based on Steve Bell, Sallie Harkness and Fred Rendell's, staff tutors at Jordanhill College of Education in Glasgow in Scotland in the 1960s, understandings of the pedagogical benefits of using narratives in pedagogical teaching and learning situations. The original creators approach their work from a practical point of view aiming to assist school teachers to make changes in accordance with the new curriculum published in Scotland in 1965. They claimed, according to Brandford (2019) "that no particular theoretical perspective influenced their work" (p. 64). Relying on the three founders of TSA, recent literature on Storyline, acknowledges the potential of TSA and for using stories in learning; for example, Schwänke and Plaskitt (2016) begin by asking the hypothetical question: "How can you learn from a narrative?" (p. 42). Providing evidence in the bible, ancient myths, TV shows and commercials, they claim that "humans love stories" (p. 43). Referring to Bell, Harkness and White (2007) they explain that "stories have been the preferred way for transferring knowledge from one generation to the next" (p. 42), and that stories "give meaning and context to information, and everyone likes to learn about things that are meaningful to them" (p. 43). Although not specifically referring to TSA, Krenicky-Albert (2004) highlights the narrative principle when arguing for the advantages of using stories in foreign language teaching, and claims that narrative "supports understanding, as well as the consolidation and recall of knowledge […] the narrative connects reality with the pupils' interests, needs and knowledge imbedding tasks and activities into a meaningful context" (p. 26). Nevertheless, surprisingly few attempts have been made to elaborate and/or explain from a more theoretical point of view, what function narratives have in TSA – something that also became evident in the work of Karlsen and Lockhart-Pedersen (2020) (chapter 19, in this anthology). Even though the research on narratives and Storyline is limited, the original creators of TSA make it clear that their epistemological premise includes that telling and creating stories is a way of knowing, and it is important to stop and dwell a bit on this proposition before entering into the chapters of the anthology.

Narratives, according to Carr (1991) represent human reality (p. 19). All human experience contains a narrative structure (ibid., p. 18). The concept of narrative includes a progression of events, a storyteller and an audience who experience the story (ibid.,

p. 46). In such a view, narratives are "the structure inherent in human experience and action" (ibid., 65). Narrativization, according to Carr (1991), is "our primary ways of organizing and giving coherence to our experience" (ibid.). But, narrativization can also reflect nothing else but wishful thinking, such as "an 'escape' from reality" (p. 15–16), and at worst as moralism, "in the interests of power and manipulation" (p. 16). In life, people tell stories, listen to stories, act and live out stories, and sometimes changes stories to make sense of the reality (Carr, 1986, p. 125–126). In this case, narrative activities according to Carr (1986) are practical before becoming a cognitive or aesthetic activity (p. 126). Narration, in this sense is "constitutive not only of action and experience but also of the self which acts and experiences" (ibid., s. 126), and thus constitutes the process of knowing. In this way, stories order our everyday experiences in a way that is useful for both learning and living. Further, stories guide us by helping us both to keep track of our past, and to orient us towards the future. Eventually, stories are fundamental to how we communicate, collaborate and co-exist by systematising knowledge, values and social practices.

In TSA, a story or a narrative creates the context in which a number of incidents (the plot) occur. This entails the participants' ownership and thus control over the learning progress (Bell & Harkness, 2013, p. 2). TSA thus structures a "narrative system" (cf. Bal, 1997) with agents; the teachers designing the "line", and actors; the students who bring the Storyline to life (cf. Bal, 1997, p. 5). The narrative structure, including time, place and characters is used to move the plot forward. A Storyline can therefore be understood within the broad corpus of narrative texts such as novels, fairy tales, newspapers, comics and other pieces of art (cf. Bal, 1997, p. 4). Different from the narrative structure in human experiences (cf. Carr, 1986, 1991), a Storyline can be considered as a piece of artwork where events are transformed "into a story by *telling* them" (Carr, 1986, p. 124). Relying on Bal's (1997) definition of narrative texts, a text where "an agent relates ('tells') a story in a particular medium, such as language, imagery, sound, buildings, or a combination thereof" (p. 5). The concrete content of a *story* is constituted by certain elements and their relationship. Following Chatman (1978), this chapter distinguishes between *events*; describing the actions and happenings in a narrative, and *existents*; consisting of the characters and the settings. Depending on the structure and relation among these elements, the story can according to Bal (1997) "produce the effect desired, be this convincing, moving, disgusting, or aesthetic" (p. 7). With this as the point of departure we will in the following, with the use of theory of narratives and TSA, present and elaborate the four main pedagogical and organising features of a Storyline: thematic framework, events, existents and subject loops (see figure 1). Each of the four features comprises specific didactical potentials which are also further developed and explored in the chapters in this anthology.
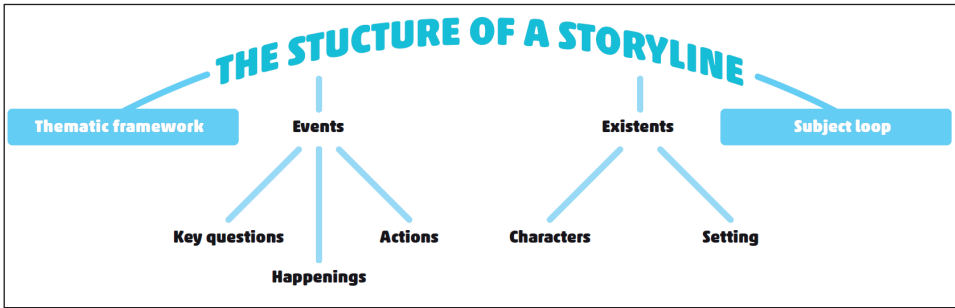
Fig. 1:    Main pedagogical and organising features of a Storyline

## What is a Storyline: Pedagogical and Organising Features

### Thematic Framework

In the context of teacher education, a Storyline is always based on a specific topic or subject matter that lets student teachers perform and achieve learning goals, including social goals. It might be curricular focus, such as science, language or the arts (Falkenberg, Håkonsson, & Claesdotter, 2004; Harkness, 2007; Omand, 2014), or more generic pedagogical goals such as learning TSA as such and how to conduct a Storyline (Karlsen, Lockhart-Pedersen, & Bjørnstad, 2019). To construct a Storyline within the specific topic, a *thematic framework* is created, something that is regarded as the first of the pedagogical and organising features of TSA. Based on the concrete content of the story; the events and the existents (cf. Chatman, 1978), always anchored at a certain time and place (cf. Bal, 1997, p. 7), the thematic framework of TSA evolves. The thematic framework is grounded in desirable knowledge, skills, and competencies that ought to be taught and practised, i.e. what the student teachers would comprehend as a result of the teaching and learning event (Hofmann, 2007). It must be added, that although the main topic for the thematic framework is a specific subject matter such as sustainability, a Storyline is always interdisciplinary; involving a combination of two or more subjects including most often aesthetic subjects. In addition, and irrespective of theme, the participants will be challenged in certain ways: cooperative learning, social learning and often transformative learning. Cooperative learning used in a Storyline to facilitate high quality group work is explored in more depth in chapter 1.

### The Events in a Storyline – Triggering Activities and Happenings

In TSA the story is moved forward through events. Events are incidents and happenings that give rise to contextual learning for the student teachers. In narrative theory, events are understood as a process or alteration, and defined as "the transition from one state to another state, caused or experienced by actors" (Bal, 1997, p. 182). In a Storyline, it is characters who cause and/or experience the events. The chosen events can relate to each other in a series of ways according to Bal (1997, p. 193). Of most relevance to TSA are the structural principles relating to time and place. One way of structuring events is

Fig. 2: An example of visual representation of a "location" in a Storyline named The Fairy-tale Forest, implemented at Østfold University Collage. Photo: Kristine Høeg Karlsen.

thus to place the events against a passage of time. Some events, according to Bal (1997) "can occur at the same time, others succeed one another" (p. 194). An event, according to Bal (1997) always "takes up *time*" (p. 7). Another way of classifying events is to base the formation of the structure on the location; the place where the event is played out (ibid., p. 194). All events occur in "a certain place that actually exists (Amsterdam) or an imaginary place (C.S. Lewis' Narnia)" (ibid, p. 7). In TSA the story could be located in a hotel, at a school, at home, at the circus or a shop (Brandford, 2007, p. 170). Events in a Storyline aim to trigger planned or unplanned activities such as a birthday, a wedding, accident or a burglary (Brandford, 2007, p. 170). In line with Bal (1997), it is important to structure events in a Storyline, in a way that allows for enough time for creative thinking and problem solving. In Storyline, the student teachers will work in groups of 4–5 individuals, and they need to discuss different solutions to a problem and eventually to agree upon a solution to conduct. It is the student teachers who are encouraged to take responsibility for moving on to the next step or to another event. It is important to note that some incidents according to Harkness (2007) will be of a generic kind, that may be applied in any topic, whilst others is more specific in relation to the explored topic. A skilful teacher will use both kinds of incidents in order to facilitate a variety of learning outcome, directed by the curriculum.

*Key questions:* In order to structure the learning process during a Storyline, key questions are used (Brandford, 2019, p. 69). Key questions, according to Brandford (2019), "develop the sequence of the Storyline and encourage activities which allow the learners to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding and support the development of skills as well as their ideas" (p. 70). Key questions are an essential aspect

of TSA in that they take their point of departure in the students' preconceptions and current knowledge. Examples of key questions in a Storyline could be according to Omand (2020) "What might happen if…?' 'Is this true in all cases?' 'What do you think about…? 'What other solutions might there be?'" (chapter 14). In this manner, key questions are part of the student-centred approach to TSA (Harkness, 2007). In addition, key questions are open questions that elicit maximum feedback that the teacher can use for developing and expanding the Storyline and the students' possibilities for learning (Omand, 2017).

The questions are usually asked in the class in a way that allows each student to reflect individually first, then talk to a friend or a small group and finally express all ideas and understandings of a phenomenon that have been revealed. This enables a variety of thoughts which can be further reflected upon and be discussed throughout the Storyline. One of the benefits with key questions, as we comprehend it, lies in the process of reflection. Students reflect in several, often gradual, ways, and on different levels, i) Individual reflective thinking – to put their thoughts into words, ii) Reflection with peers – to share thoughts with one another, iii) Reflection in class – to disclose thoughts in public and iv) Following up the collective reflections – to use the experiences of a community. Working with key questions is a profound dialogical pedagogy with democratic ideals (Falkenberg & Håkonsson, 2004), thus the link to social-cultural learning theories is evident. Vygotsky (1986) advocates social interaction in order for students to develop knowledge and skills. Key questions are further developed in chapter 14, written by Carol Omand (cf. Omand, 2020).

**Existents in a Storyline – the Characters and the Setting**

In a Storyline, student teachers are invited to construct a setting and create imaginary characters used when exploring events and incidents (cf. Harkness, 2007). The use of characters marks out TSA from other pedagogical approaches, and the characters play a significant role throughout the Storyline work. In narrative theory, actors, that are not only humans, are the "agents that perform action" (Bal, 1997, p. 5). To act, is by Bal (1997) defined as "to cause or to experience an event" (ibid.). In any story, the actors are important, and in TSA the participants take on fictional roles such as family members, friends, job colleagues (Brandford, 2007, p. 170). In TSA, several activities play crucial roles when the student teachers develop their characters and the setting of the story. In the following we will shortly describe the use of drama and the creation of visual representations.

One way of supporting the student teachers to take on the fictional roles, and further to set the characters into a place and time, is to use drama (McNaughton, 2007). Drama, according to McNaughton (2007) adds an extra dimension to Storyline. This means to not only look at the character from the outside, but to actually bring the characters to life and to be the character. Rather than imagine how people lived, drama allows for playing the events out. While being in character, student teachers are allowed to think freely and express their views without risking revealing their personal identity. Drama thus, according to McNaughton (2007) allows the learner "a high degree

Fig. 3:
One of the creatures made, from *The Fairy-Tale Forest Storyline* discussed in chapter 8. Photo: Kristine Høeg Karlsen.

of challenge, while at the same time offering a low level of threat" (p. 152). Following the work of Heathcote (1991) the teacher's role is to create the conditions that support learners taking on roles as experts in an imaginary enterprise. Heathcote (1991) stresses that the purpose is not to get totally involved in the imagined world, but to bear in mind both the fictional world and the reality of the learning context (see also Boal, 1995).

Second, the characters and the setting (context) are made visible to all participants through the use of visual representations, which also have a profound role in TSA. Visual representations give tangible shape to the co-actions, which in turn help the learners to create a collective picture and frames the story. Bamford (2006) stresses the importance of visual literacy skills, and she claims that contemporary culture is more and more dependent on the visual because of its ability to communicate instantaneously and comprehensively. As with all literacy forms, visual literacy contains problem solving and critical thinking. In addition to improve the learner's art skills, their imaginative ability, creativity and social understanding will increase, Bamford (2006) claims. One concrete example of a visual representation in TSA, is the frieze. The frieze, according to Lindberg (2000, p. 45), is a combination of a model, poster and wall that aim to visualise the setting or context in the story. It can, like the created characters, be two- or three dimensional. It is built up purposefully, so it can grow and change in line with the story (ibid., p. 45). Visual representations and props are further explored in chapter 4, in the work of Karlsen, Motzfeldt, Pilskog, Rasmussen and Halstvedt (2020).

**A specific didactic tool – The subject loops**

Finally, in TSA, it is important to stress that not all the activities are part of the ongoing story, some are 'outside' (cf. Fauskanger, 2002, p. 319). On some occasions during the learning process, the story takes a short break. When the story is put on hold, there is time for the learners to explore a subject matter in greater depth. This is by Fauskanger (2002, p. 319) referred to as a "subject loop", defined as a point in the process "when the class, or parts of the class, take a break in the narrative itself to immerse themselves in a subject that is relevant to the story" (ibid., authors' translations). Fauskanger (2002) stresses, by quoting Bolstad (2001, p. 74–75) that the subject loops are important to add depth in the matter of the subject, because a story without depth, can risk only becoming an entertaining story. Nevertheless, the subject loops must according to Fauskanger (2002, p. 319) be used with care. It is an advantage that the subject loops are relatively short, and if there is not too much time between each time the class concentrates on the story. The danger is that the class loses cohesion in the story, and if this happens, then the students can then lose interest and involvement in the Storyline.

## Obstacles and keys to effective use of TSA in Teacher Education

The use of TSA in teacher education, has the potential to give student teachers an opportunity to experience and explore for themselves, how stories can give rise to valuable knowledge. Teaching through stories, thus represents an innovative and creative approach to teaching and learning. If we want teachers in school to use alternative approaches, the teacher education according to Emo and Emo (2016) "should see innovation and creativity modelled in their university programmes" (p. 241). In this anthology, we claim that TSA can be used by teacher educators to bridge the gap between theory and practice (Solstad, 2006). This implies that TSA gives student teachers an opportunity to develop knowledge within the area of pedagogical theories on a didactic level, while at the same time experiencing the approach in practice on campus. Examples of educational theories that have had an impact on TSA are progressive and pragmatic views (Dewey, 2009), sociocultural and social constructive perspectives (Vygotsky, 1978; 1986) and critical pedagogy (Freire, 2005). Consequently, teaching and learning in TSA is based on an *active and reflective approach* (Dewey, 2009). Further, TSA is taught within the framework of *problem-solving* and is appropriately scaffolded (Bruner, 1996; Holton & Clarke, 2006; Simons & Klein, 2007), where *cooperative learning* is required (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Vygotsky, 1978). Finally in TSA, the learner is given an opportunity to demonstrate learning in *authentic* manner (Bruner, 1996). To recapitulate, Storyline in teacher education, has two main functions; to exemplify how to conduct a pedagogical method to immerse and strengthen students' understanding of learning theories while actually "living" them. In this manner, experiencing TSA in teacher education develops the student teachers' professional identity (cf. Tsybulsky & Muchnik-Rozanov, 2019, p. 48), which is a major concern in teacher education. Although there are few direct advantages for bringing TSA into teacher education, there are obstacles to effective use of such a narrative approach.

First, in contrast to Storyline in the school context, Storyline in teacher education includes a meta-perspective (cf. Karlsen et al. 2019). To flip between being in the actual story and reflecting on how TSA will work as a didactic approach in school, can be challenging. Based on the research on TSA, among the most challenging aspects appears to be the entering into the narrative and taking on the fictional roles (Emo, 2010; Karlsen et al., 2019; Leming, 2016). Whilst pupils in school can fully experience the story and be in character, student teachers simultaneously have to reflect on the use of, for instance, *fictional characters* in an educational setting, and thus they are forced to step in and out of the story and the role. One way to overcome this obstacle is to explicitly and concurrently work with both levels, by asking, for example: What does my character think of this event and what do I, as a student teacher, think of the event? In line with Vygotsky (1986), this is a way of creating meaning of the world by exploring it through language. Another technique to help the student teachers to move between these levels is to let them journalise (Gunnels, 1997; Ibarreta & McLeod, 2004; Walker, 2006). Keeping a diary or logbook in both a structured and unstructured way, may bring sense to the student's thoughts, feelings and experiences. Ibarreta and McLeod (2004) reveal through their study of student teacher practice, that students reported enlarged capabilities in critical thinking and self-directed learning by keeping a journal. This critical thinking involved the ability to analyse substantial events that occurred during practice. By integrating course literature, theory and knowledge gained from previous lectures in the course, the students were encouraged to explore in depth significant features. Structured guidelines, following Bruner (1996), are required if such a method is used.

Secondly, to succeed with the practical implementation with TSA, the learning process needs to be carefully planned, as the narrative structure, the features, and the relation among them, can be rather complex. The complexity increases as the subject learning is not only 'school subjects' but also pedagogy (didactics). Those new to TSA need to experience and practise the pedagogical and organising features to be able to apply Storyline in their own teaching. Quoting Falkenberg (2016),

> "You cannot learn to use the Storyline approach from merely listening to a lecture or reading an article. At best, it gives you some information about it, which probably generates interest to learn more. Watching a film or visiting a class working with a Storyline project is fine but not quite enough either. Participating, discussing the matter with others or even better practicing and working with it our self are obviously more effective ways of learning. The best way might well be when after having learnt it, you *teach* it to others" (p. 221).

If student teachers are to really learn TSA, it is not enough to hear about the approach, or even experience the approach on campus. Following Falkenberg (2016), they need to practice teaching TSA in order to translate campus-based knowledge to "real-world" situations. One place to start, could be to include TSA in the student teachers' placement practice in the schools. This is also what Pridham, O'Mallon and Prain (2012) refer to as applied learning. Applied learning is regarded as central for preparing students for prospective workplaces (Harteis & Gruber, 2004; Pridham et al., 2012). In our case,

the applied learning activity, i.e. the Storyline, is embedded as part of a campus-based course, in order to be applied in the school setting. Applied learning is alleged to be efficient as it entails practical directives (Dalton, 2004). However, facilitating Storyline in teacher education, is not meant to be applied in an instrumental manner. Teaching and learning is complex and cannot just be imitated, but needs to be embodied by the student teachers, which takes time. Integrating TSA in teacher education, can start a process that will continue over time. Conducting a Storyline can be compared to being a captain of a boat; you have to steer the journey, lead the crew, govern the process and enjoy it! Thus, it requires quite different qualities than traditional lecture work. On the other hand, once a Storyline is planned the hard work is done and can be used and developed over and over again.

To summarise, TSA in the context of teacher education may help student teachers to develop an awareness of how teaching and learning structured by components of a story can provide them with an alternative framework that bridges the gap between theory and practice (cf. Solstad, 2006). Teaching and learning in teacher education, must provide student teachers with a high level of practical relevance to enable them to acquire the platform they need for their future profession to adapt successfully to the evolving educational environment. Taught with care, TSA is an example of one such approach teacher educators can use to make teaching and learning on campus matter for student teachers on a practical and didactic level.

## The content and organisation of the book

TSA can be theoretically supported in different ways and has been over the years. That is not to say that anything goes, but to acknowledge that TSA is inclined to move forward and to be progressive, which in turn allows for integrating evolving pedagogy. Additionally, Storyline is a multifaceted approach which recognises various pedagogical perspectives and learning theories. The different features of the Storyline may hence have various pedagogical and didactical affiliations, which will be acknowledged through the chapters of the anthology. The overall aim of this anthology is thus to contribute new knowledge on Storyline, in the context of teacher education. The intention is to advance TSA and take certain aspects of the approach further, drawing both on previous literature and the foundations of Storyline, and on recent studies and enhanced theoretical perspectives. In the following, the content and structure of the anthology is outlined.

### Strand one: Learning *about* Storyline

The anthology has a threefold structure, building on three different tracks. The first strand focuses on developing the teacher profession: Learning *about* Storyline as a pedagogical approach, and concerns a broad variety of content fields, interdisciplinary and collaboration within teacher education. In the first chapter of the anthology, titled, *Cooperative Learning: The Power of Positive Interdependence in Storyline*, Kristine Høeg Karlsen, Heidi Remberg Høeg and Ellen Høeg, based on observation and in depth

group interviews with second year student teachers at a Norwegian University College, aim to contribute comprehensive knowledge on how cooperative learning is perceived by student teachers with regards to ensuring high quality peer relationships in a Storyline. This chapter has undergone a peer-review process.

Transformative learning and identity building is the core in Chapter 2 titled, *Transformative Learning and Identity Building through Aesthetic Experiences in a Storyline*. In this chapter, Margaretha Häggström and Katharina Dahlbäck based on a Swedish educational context, focus on the notions of multimodality and aesthetic experiences with the aim of developing knowledge on aesthetics' impact on learning in a Storyline, three dimensions on learning: content, incentive and environment is integrated. This chapter has undergone a peer-review process.

In Chapter 3, titled, *Using Storyline in Teacher Education: 'I am now the teacher I always believed I wanted to be'*, Wendy Emo, Ken Emo, Lynda Venhuizen, Renae Ekstrand and Kathryn Penrod, as a part of an action research, explore how university teacher educators within an American perspective perceive affective learning as part of TSA. This chapter highlights unanticipated reactions, such as enjoyment of teachers' own lessons, and a change from focusing on education's how to why. This chapter has undergone a peer-review process.

In Chapter 4, we learn about imaginative "make-believe" experiences activated through the use of a Storyline focusing on sustainability. In the chapter, titled, *An Exploration of the "Mimetic Aspects" of Storyline Used as a Creative and Imaginative Approach to Teaching and Learning in Teacher Education,* Kristine Høeg Karlsen, Gitte Cecilie Motzfeldt, Hanne Eik Pilskog, Adrian Kristinsønn Rasmussen and Camilla Blikstad Halstvedt, contribute with a new perspective on the mimetic aspects of Storyline, with value for the student teachers' professional development. The study is set in a Norwegian context and based on audio recordings and group interviews with student teachers. This chapter has undergone a peer-review process.

The implementation of the notion and significance of multimodality in a language course for Swedish primary school teachers is described in Chapter 5, by Margaretha Häggström, Eva-Lena Happstadius, Anna Udén. This chapter, titled, *Storyline: A Way to Understand Multimodality in a Learning Context and Teacher Education, in Theory and Practice*, aims at elucidating how Storyline in teacher education can bridge the gap between theory and practice. The text is based on a five-year long practice of implementing a Storyline, in which the student teachers are building working teams for multimodal language teaching and learning. The authors suggest that supervising TSA in parallel with teaching the notion of multimodality is a fruitful way of integrating theory and practice.

Again, from an American perspective, Wendy Emo and Ken Emo explore how Storyline affects teachers, students and families in Chapter 6. This chapter, titled, *How Does Teaching with Storyline Affect Teachers, Students and Families?,* shows the effects that Storyline has on teachers, the incentives for using TSA and how it might influence teachers' work. One of the results of the study is that, although awkward tensions between vision and reality (experienced by both the teachers and the principal) were discovered, they found that Storyline allowed teachers to develop their full potential

through using their creativity, curiosity, and intellectual exploration. The study is based on qualitative interviews and has undertaken a blind review process.

Finally, Doris Kocher from a German perspective, captures in Chapter 7 how foreign language learning could be carried out in a motivating and effective way. Her chapter, titled, *Storyline: Why? What? How? The Storyline Approach in Teacher Education,* is based on three action research case studies, in which she studied the outcome of a language teaching methodology course she had designed for teacher education. In this course, the topic was both language and pedagogy, where the goal was to develop language skills and at the same time learn how and why Storyline could be implemented in foreign language classes at school. The chapter has undergone a blind review process.

**Strand two: Learning *through* Storyline**

In the second strand TSA is used as a vehicle for other learning: Learning a topic *through* Storyline. In the following chapters the studies address various kinds of subject specific outcomes of TSA such as the learning of mathematical content knowledge, sustainability and aesthetic learning. In Chapter 8, *The Fairy-Tale Forest: Developing Pedagogical Content Knowledge for Teaching Primary School Mathematics in The Scottish Storyline Approach,* Kristine Høeg Karlsen, Stein A. Berggren, Ali Ludvigsen, and Ragnhild Louise Næsje, discuss how mathematical pedagogical content knowledge is developed by first year Norwegian student teachers in a cross-curricular Storyline focusing on fairy tales, including the three subjects: mathematics, Norwegian and pedagogy. In the study it becomes evident that the student teachers encountered entirely novel ways of learning mathematics through TSA. This chapter has undergone a peer-review process.

In Chapter 9, titled, *Take Action! Encountering Disorienting Dilemmas in Order to Include the Other-than-Human World – an Act of Sustainable Thinking,* we can read about a student teacher who uses TSA to design a pedagogical approach with the aim of enhancing pupils' ecological literacy. The chapter, written by Margaretha Häggström and Linus Djurstedt, builds on a one-year long participatory action research study, including TSA in a primary school. The role of the teacher for successful processes is addressed, and that teacher flexibility and open-mindedness are crucial for student agency. This chapter has undergone a peer-review process.

Building on on-going research on TSA in teacher education, Sharon Ahlquist discusses from a Swedish perspective how Storyline may facilitate second language teaching in Chapter 10, *Using The Storyline Approach to Integrate Cognition and Emotion in Second Language Education*. She illustrates how TSA may facilitate a range of contents, meet different educational demands and fulfil several goals at the same time, and stresses the need for in-depth knowledge on how Meta Storylines can be implemented in teacher education. This chapter has undergone a peer-review process.

In Chapter 11, *Storyline and Motivation. An Action Research Case Study*, Peter J. Mitchell elaborates on motivation and its impact on students' learning processes through Storyline work. Motivation is crucial to learning processes, and through an action research design, Mitchell argues that TSA motivates learners in both intrinsic and extrinsic ways. One reason for this, according to this study, is that Storyline enables

increased student ownership of learning. The chapter has undergone a blind review process.

In Chapter 12, *Making Sense of Sustainable Development*, Marit Storhaug and Siv Eie, deliberate how TSA can be a substantial part of a student teacher's repertoire, while learning about sustainable living in parallel with practice-oriented teaching on campus. The Storyline-project discussed is based on what they call the need for a reorientation of teaching practice, together with teaching and learning for sustainable futures. The Storyline was included in a course in social science, and the result shows that the learning processes can be characterised as "double un-locking", as a reciprocal movement between content knowledge and students. The chapter reveals how TSA promoted student teachers' knowledge of sustainability issues. This chapter has undergone a peer-review process.

The last chapter of this strand, Chapter 13, *Being in the Moment – An Investigation of the Aesthetic Learning Processes in a Storyline* by Gunhild Bjørnstad and Solveig Toft contributes with comprehensive knowledge on how Aesthetic Learning Processes are generated through Storyline activities. The purpose of this chapter is to disclose different kinds of aesthetic competences that enhance through TSA, and which competences need explicit additional evolved aesthetic content education. The authors elucidate the importance of learning the basics of art in order to use art efficiently. This chapter has undergone a peer-review process.

**Strand 3: Learning *in* Storyline**

The third and final strand puts an emphasis on contributing with knowledge aiming to develop The Storyline Approach: Learning *in* Storyline. This strand starts with Chapter 14, *The Importance of Effective Questioning on Learning Processes in a Storyline,* by Scottish Carol Omand who has over forty years' experience in working with TSA. Omand emphasises that questioning is fundamental in TSA, as in teaching and learning, not least because of its dialogical methodology. In this chapter Omand also stresses that teachers' ability to create and use effective questioning is connected to how teacher education supports student teachers in developing such skills. Further, we learn that key questions are not just any questions, but thoroughly developed, modulated and adjusted to the specific theme and circumstances. The chapter draws on both theories supported by TSA and Omand's own experience of TSA throughout the years.

Ulf Schwänke from a German perspective addresses the risk of using Storyline as an instrument of manipulation, in Chapter 15, titled, *Storyline and Ideology: How to Avoid Manipulation in Teaching.* Schwänke, who is a former exchange lecturer at Jordanhill College of Education in Glasgow, has for more than 30 years now been practising and developing Storyline. In this chapter he confronts concerns about whether TSA may be used to indoctrinate learners. The chapter starts with distinguishing between manipulation and influence and continues by treating critical issues throughout the text. Schwänke demonstrates, step by step, how TSA has proved to empower the learner, actively supporting learners to become free citizens.

The next two chapters, Chapter 16 by Anna-Lena Østern and Chapter 17 by Diana Ellis, discuss critical and challenging issues that can arise when implementing TSA as part of educational practices. These chapters describe practical implementations of Storyline from a design point of view and explore how teaching Storyline makes a change in the learning process. Østern, in her chapter, *Artistry in Storyline Pedagogy. Aesthetic Educational Design as Part of Deep Teaching and Learning,* elaborates on how artistry may be enhanced through TSA, and how artistry can be a vehicle for deep learning. She explores seven features of aesthetic educational design, which involves a performative, enquiry-based approach, including embodiment, and affective as well as sensory learning opportunities. This chapter has undergone a peer-review process.

Diana Ellis from a Scottish perspective describes a three-year long project, in which five Global Storylines were developed in her chapter, *From Acting to Action. Transformative Learning for Sustainability through Global Storylines.* The chapter focuses on how teachers can be supported and empowered to use TSA through a professional learning programme. Educational drama and sustainability were central aspects of these Storylines, and Diana Ellis reflects on and argues that the participants extend and deepen their emotional response to the explored issues, included in the Storyline.

In Chapter 18, *How digital tools can be used in Storyline,* Ellen Romstad presents her own reflections on TSA in the digital era and the digital competence as part of essential 21st century skills. The chapter reveals several digital platforms that can be used for creating, for example, Storyline characters. Romstad points out that teachers need professional competence for using a digital Storyline, which calls for enhanced supplementary training.

The final chapter of the anthology is Kristine Høeg Karlsen and Virginia Lockhart-Pedersen's Chapter 19, *Story-based Cross-Curricular Teaching and Learning: A Systematic Mapping of the Research Literature on The Scottish Storyline Approach.* As the title states, this chapter presents a comprehensive systematic mapping of the research publications on TSA. The purpose of this study is to understand and provide critique to the growing body of literature on TSA, and thus to derive an evidence-based framework for this particular approach to direct future research efforts. This chapter has undergone a peer-review process.

In conclusion, it must be noted that each finished chapter, before it was included in the anthology, was moulded, shaped, and honed during the long process of dialogue between authors, co-authors, editors and peer reviewers[2] to all of whom we are immeasurably grateful. The 14 peer-reviewed publications aim to present new and verifiable findings and have all been subjected to a blind review process with varied peer-reviewers selected for each and every chapter. It is important to emphasise that the review process has been *blind,* where neither the peer reviewer(s) nor the editors have connection to the author(s). The remaining five chapters (Chapter 5, 14, 15, 17 and 18) have been included to give a more complete perspective on the Storyline Approach. They represent practical applications of the approach written by practitioners, some of

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2    A a total of 19 blind peer-reviewers have been included in the peer-reviewed process of this anthology.

whose experience in initial teacher education, delivering training, writing Storylines, authoring books, international consultancy and visionary thinking spans five decades. Drawing on educational theory and their own specialisms, these chapters have also been subjected to the same rigorous scrutiny, reworking, revision, and feedback from the co-authors and editors of the anthology. The ultimate responsibility for the content of all chapters lies, nevertheless, with the contributors.

We would like to give special thanks to John MacDonald, who has done an incredible job of copy-editing and proofreading all the chapters in the anthology. His critical attention to detail, thoroughness and comprehensive expertise have enhanced the chapters and given cohesion and consistency of style appropriate to the anthology. Finally, we must thank Arnstein Hjelde, Director of Research at The Department of Education, Østfold University College, and the Dean of the Faculty of Education at Østfold University College who has helped us to realise the project through financial support to Kristine Høeg Karlsen and to Waxmann. Without this support, the project would not have been possible.

It was our initial intention to capture the diversity of practice and thinking on The Storyline Approach and we are proud of our achievement, encouraged and enthused by the early feedback. The enduring objective of this anthology is to guide and facilitate teacher educators, school teachers, student teachers, as well as school leaders and school owners to use The Storyline Approach. Furthermore, the aim is to facilitate researchers to explore this innovative and student-active approach to learning – research that will provide knowledge that can be used to improve Storyline and bridge the gap between research and practice within this particular field. Everyone interested in cross-curricular, creative and topic-based learning will potentially find this anthology enlightening. This anthology is not the end, but, as we have seen in so many of the chapters, the starting point for renewed research, discussion, debate, participation and dissemination of Storyline.

## Acknowledgement

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# Strand 1

Image from the Storyline *Where good and evil forces fight for power* which shows the boxes that the students made for storytelling. Photo: Kristine Høeg Karlsen.