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Topic: Teaching Arabic Through Story
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Teaching Arabic Through Story
Presented by Sajida Abu Ali
Summary by Nacheda Baroud Tizani

The use of story-telling when teaching a foreign language is essential to bringing the language alive, and taking it out of the standard learning context. Story-telling offers a variety of different ways to present information for the teacher, and it offers a variety of ways for the student to comprehend the lesson. Through story-telling, the teacher has creative control and can share both real and imaginative experiences to engage the students in an innovative learning environment.

With story-telling, the entire thematic structure of teaching a foreign language can be constructed to include various ideas. Organizing a thematic structure allows a teacher to group together various lessons, have materials significant to the theme, and “create continuity and connection, across concepts and languages”. These three elements help to make the lesson “personally relevant” to each student.

The four practical elements of implementation include creating a thematic instruction with comprehensible and meaningful content. In this way the students are not just learning vocabulary and language in isolation, they are learning relevant to particular situations and life experiences. Thematic instruction can also help to structure the lesson around meaningful goals. Students can learn moral values pertinent to their culture and community, while at the same time learning new language terms. The National Standards have taught that through thematic instruction the teacher is able to focus on the “big picture” and incorporate various elements, rather than working on just standard-based instruction.

Thematic instruction combined with story-telling provides students with realistic opportunities to exercise foreign language along with integral cultural experiences. In this way learning is no longer a solitary experience but a community experience shared by all.

References used by Presenter:

Egan, Kieran. *Teaching as Story Telling*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.

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