Professional lifelong learning: beyond reflective practice

Metaphors, stories and humour as a learning platform. - Developing formative assessors with capabilities to encourage sustainable assessment.

Linda Jones. Royal veterinary College

1. Abstract

Metaphors, stories and humour as a learning platform. - Developing formative assessors with capabilities to encourage sustainable assessment.

…the ancient art of storytelling is being recognised as the perfect tool for humanizing the workplace, increasing the creativity of our learning environments, and as a teaching tool to create stronger communities “

New Zealand Guild of Storytellers.

The growing literature conceptualising formative assessment identifies its centrality to all professional learning and development but whilst professional teaching and learning have taken a constructivist turn the potential of assessment in learning remains under developed. Formative assessment is a significant component in the development of reflective practitioners and lifelong learners. Recognising the need to align formative assessment with longer term learning goals Boud identifies an “inadequacy of formative assessment practices.” (2005) and Yorke (2003 p202) identified staff development for assessment as vital.

This paper contributes to a pool of know-how and returns to face (purpose) and consequential validity issues in assessment design. It argues that sustainable assessment and progressive, career-long reflexivity requires educators in professional formation and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to work from an expressive rather than solely explanatory paradigm.

Expressive formative assessment can weave constructivist notions into pedagogical practice; and move away from correcting to directing learner understanding (Yorke 2001 p477) by allowing dialogue and individual interpretation of ideas. Formative assessors need to be encouraged, enabled and supported to risk becoming creative and
adaptable facilitators of learner centred-learning by understanding and applying dialogic tools.

This paper shares one empirically developed tool showing how storytelling methodologies work within a constructivist paradigm, encourages reflexivity and allows learners and facilitators to co-generate expressive rather than explanatory knowledge. Expressive, arts-based epistemological approaches are coherent with constructivist understandings and require assessor / pedagogues who can develop and manage learning platforms, adopt receptive rather than a proactive positions and tolerate the ambiguity inherent in “poetised reflection”. (Willis 2000)
“1. Understanding the principles underlying defensive magic.
2. Learning to recognise situations in which defensive magic can legally be used.
3. Placing the use of defensive magic in the context for practical use…
‘Well Miss Granger I think the course aims are perfectly clear if you read them through carefully’ said Professor Umbridge in a voice of determined sweetness.
“Well I don’t said Hermoine bluntly. There is nothing written there about using defensive spells”

(Learning outcomes for “Defence against the dark arts” module. Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix 216-8)

The ubiquitous learning outcomes, even make an appearance at Hogwarts. Hermoine’s concerns are echoed in this paper which contends although we are beginning to articulate the principles there is little “written about using” formative assessment or how to transform the predominantly summative assessment models dominant in Higher Education. The legitimacy of storytelling, metaphor and, humour is explored with reference to a small scale study into story telling, metaphor and humour as a pedagogic device (Jones 2001).

The learning platform (figure 1) derived from the study provides a theoretical model, for situating and explicating these dialogic skills within the formative assessment discourse.

The paper explores how we render explicit the universal tool of story telling in the context this context. We need to rise to the challenges of developing educators equipped with appropriate skills, knowledge and dispositions to implement the emergent formative assessment theories in the context of lifelong learning and sustainable assessment. (Boud 2005 & 2000)

“Formative assessment in Higher Education involves or should involve considerations that are given little attention in discussions about practice” (Knight and Yorke 2003 p 34)
This paper errs towards Willis’s (2000) “expressive”, arts based, holistic pedagogic paradigms rather than the traditional hypothetico-deductive, “explanatory paradigm”. Seven features characterise this approach - Creating a virtual reality; allowing ambiguity; use of expressive / contextualised vernacular language; promotion of empathy, feelings and insight, personal signature and aesthetic form. All are present in the ideas presented below which bridge pedagogic practice for formative assessment purposes and constructivist ideals of being, knowing and telling -

“not to prompt a single, closed convergent reading but rather to persuade readers to contribute answers to dilemmas posed with a text” (Eisner and Barone in Willis 2000 p39)

This is coherent with many contemporary discourses calling for formative assessment to be placed at the heart of learning and professional development practices. (e.g. Boud 2000, & 2005 and Yorke 2003). The primary purpose of formative assessment is to help students develop as learners, inform them about the quality of the work they have produced and about how they might tackle future assigned tasks (Yorke 2005). The argument here supports calls for new epistemologies and practical approaches “free from the shadow of summative assessment” (Yorke 2003 p496 ) and endorses the need for formative assessment to be a

“collaborative act between staff and student whose primary purpose is to enhance the capability of the latter to the fullest extent possible. The theoretical constructs that underpin formative assessment are not widely appreciated amongst lecturers in higher education, and ....offer a number of points which may be helpful to staff concerned with the enhancement of pedagogy – and perhaps with researching it. (ibid)
Having used the outcomes of the study to present storytelling as a means to achieve such collaboration findings are re-mapped against a number of points from Boud’s call for sustainable assessment practices (2000) aligned with lifelong learning policy (2005).

“Sustainable assessment ... meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of students to meet their own future learning needs” (Boud 2000 p151)

The learning platform offers an evidence-based pedagogic model as a framework suitable for achieving some of the shared tasks of pedagogic and formative assessment activities – formative pedagogy. Formative pedagogy needs educators with a capacity to juggle the societal demands for summative assessment (certification purpose) with the development of what Barnett has termed meta-competence and meta-cognition (2000 p82) or many professions term reflective practitioners. (Schon 1983)
Figure 1

The Story As A Learning Platform

The Learning Platform

CONCEPTS

IDEAS

INFORMATION

Reflection and Experience

Oh yes, I recognize that feeling; sort of person/ideal!

Well perhaps I should reconsider!

Engage Interest

I wonder what/why?

Well look at that!

I like being told stories!

Positive Learning Environment

She seems human, I can trust her!

Structured/Constructive Disagreement/Dialogue

Versimilitude

Aha!

Building a Scaffold/Framework

Well I think its about...

Well I disagree...
The passionate fact.

Storytelling, appears in almost every known culture throughout history but finds little mention in adult learning literature. The mis-match between espoused constructivist rhetoric of lifelong learning and realities of pedagogic practices has been the focus of much educational discourse. The 2001 study was designed to illuminate the pedagogic potential and legitimate the use of story form (anecdotes, metaphors, humour, myths etc) amongst educators charged with the professional development of pedagogic communities.

Setting the scene

Historically British definitions of pedagogy reinforced the hierarchical notions of teacher-centred learner relationships and objectivist conceptions of knowledge transfer. However the definition of pedagogy used in this study was constructivist and student-centred.

“Any conscious activity by one person designed to enhance learning in another”. (p17 Mortimore 1999)

The approach adopted was rooted in phenomenology (Marton and Saljo 1976) and utilized constructivist theories and approaches to identify the overlap between the storytellers craft and learning processes. Gagne’s series of “events” was used as a constructivist framework for describing the intentions of effective pedagogic intervention.

- Activating motivation
- Informing the learner of the objective
- Directing attention
- Stimulating recall
• Providing learner guidance
• Enhancing retention
• Promoting the transfer of learning
• Eliciting performance and
• Providing feedback

(in Mortimore 1999 p84)

These pedagogic purposes resonated with the pedagogic purposes of story form summarised from Strauss’ “The Passionate Fact”

➢ Engaging the interest of listeners
➢ Enabling visualisation
➢ Giving information
➢ Helping memory
➢ Creating a relaxing environment
➢ Questioning assumptions and facilitating attitude change
➢ Helping understanding.

The original research concluded that explicit and discerning use of storytelling does provides a tool for promoting deep approaches to learning as defined by Marton et al 1983 in Entwistle 1992 and for achieving shifts from insular to connective knowledge (Young and Lucas in Morton 1999) and meta-cognition (Barnett 2000).

R7 “Without exception stories help gain insight into alien concepts (Q2b)\(^1\)

Participants in the research expressed beliefs that the intentional and skillful use of story form serves to engage and direct the attention of an audience; provide a conceptual framework for reflection & meta-cognition; aid recall and create a conceptual structure to which new propositional and disciplinary content and existing knowledge can be connected.

\(^1\) R represents the specific respondent 1-19 whilst Q identifies to which question the comment was related.
The story of the research (methodology).

Narrative enquiry (Phillips and Hardy 2002) was used to analyse responses to a questionnaire and (audio recordings of) semi-structured group interviews. The findings were presented as verbatim comments under headings predicted from the literature review and emerging iteratively from the analysis. The approach was allied with Willis’ (2000 Chpter 2) account of expressive rather than explanatory research paradigms and stories to aid “poetised reflection” (Willis 2005).

Characters (research sample)

4 groups of friends, acquaintances and people known to the researcher only in their professional capacity (e.g. her chiropractor!) comprised of nine men and ten women, four aged between 20 - 40 eight aged 41 - 50 and six between 51 -60. All bar one participant were graduates, four having gained Phd/ M Phil status and this ethnically diverse “convenience sample” (Gillam’s 2000 p18) random in relation to any known interest in story telling were invited to attend semi-structured group interviews and complete questionnaires.

- Group 1 was naturally occurring - lecturer and students on a Teaching and Learning for Adults module at the Institute of Education, London.
- Group 2 and 3 comprised of 11 individuals in unequal groups of 4 and 7.
- Group 4 comprised of 2 people- unable to attend the semi-structured interviews but agreeing to complete the questionnaire.

The plot. (A summary of the rationale, responses and analysis.)

Q 1 “How do you use stories in your life?”
Identified how stories performed multiple functions and a significant influence in the lives (and learning) of most participants. E.g.

- **R1**: learn, teach, have fun, to dream
- **R2**: peer discussions
- **R6**: Educational case studies, specific to the general
- **R8**: As examples in teaching, learning, communicating, relaxing
- **R9**: amuse others, to hold peoples attention so I can hold the floor
- **R10**: Learning from my own and other’s experiences, reflecting on changes, hearing how others have overcome obstacles
- **R12**: Mentoring

Q 2a: "Thinking back over your personal and professional development, since leaving school note the initials of some of the people that have best helped you learn”

Helped participants reflect on significant pedagogues and learning in their lives and created a reference point for Q2b.

Q2b: Did they, or other pedagogues tell stories? If so how did stories help you learn?

Was designed to explore experiences and connections between storytelling, learning and personal development. E.g.

- **R17**: Some stories held my interest and could underline a point/ reinforce/widen imagination/ tell of former times and share experiences
- **R2**: Deep principles made into pictures and images constructed made you understand
- **R4**: Share good practice, get people thinking, enables people to make something simpler
Yes. Occasionally helped illustrate points trying to make: provide examples of how things got done: and some framework for looking at things differently.

Helped understand something through a different window..... imagination and possibilities... a sense of something ancient and communal to illustrate and therefore to keep an idea planted in rich soil

Q3- Do you use stories to help others learn – if so how? – Designed to generate a composite list of intentional uses made of storytelling:

Illustration and comparison
During class spontaneously, engage in the new, motivate or attract peoples attention
Yes in different ways e.g. I use analogy or give examples of how things can work in different ways
Yes especially with humour, I have taken fragments of my experience and woven them into stories that fit the theme of whatever we are discussing in this way. We can all use other peoples experiences to learn without having the actual experience itself
To make the point more accessible, increase a sense of community, encouraging others to share soul experiences too. I used them to be funny and lighten things up. I use them to say in a more poetic way than I might otherwise. I don’t use them as often as I might like.

The responses to question 2b and 3 above overlap with Gagne’s pedagogic event, Strauss’s potentials for storytelling and Willis’s advocacy of “expressive & imaginal” paradigms. (2000 & 2005). Group discussions reached broad agreement that stories contribute to the development of the bigger picture, a gist, a concept and creates a climate for catalysing the transformation information into learning.
Stories, designed to explore specific issues relating to story form, were included in the questionnaire and structured the discussions. Participants were asked to rate statements as 1 (completely agree) to 5 (completely disagree). Graphs 1, 2 and 3 summarise the (written) responses.

**Story 1 and Q4-6.**

The purpose

- Explore the meanings made
- Identify similarities and differences of what might be learned and explore its potential as an intentional pedagogic device.
- Evaluate the messages & images received, links to personal experience; was humour valuable?

Story 1. The local guide noticed an elderly woman had strayed off the boardwalk and was sipping geyser water from a cup.

He came up to her and said “Ma’am? Did you know you are not supposed to drink this water?” She ignored him.

He straightened his hat and cleared his throat and said “Ma’am? It is specifically against park service rules to drink this water.” She ignored him still.

He bent down into her face and said “Ma’am? If you drink this water, it is going to give you loose bowels”

She looked up at him and said “Young man, that’s just what I’m hoping for.”
Q7. **This story makes a point**  Although 14 participants agreed this masks the variation in understandings and the rich discussion.

Q8  **This story has a connection to my life?**  Only 2 participants actively disagreed, suggesting some level of engagement.

Q9  **This story creates an image in my minds eye** No respondents actively disagreed. All reported visualising the exchange but with imaginal differences.

Q10  **This story made me laugh or smile.** All but 2 people were amused. But the humorous meanings were different. Some respondents used humour themselves. E.g.

   
   
   **R15**   *I learned never stand too close to someone drinking geezer water.*

Q11  **Reading this increased my interest in storytelling.** Nine participants agreed to some extend with this statement. Some participants declared a previous interest in storytelling.

**Story 2 and Q 12-14.**

**Purpose**

- Consider the potential of stories as a tool for exploring attitudes - stereotyping
➢ Explore the issue of truth
➢ Check out intentional use of contentious humour / high risk stories to generate the potential for structured disagreement (Rosenberg 2000)

Story 2 The construction site foreman yelled “Paddy get over here”. A young Irish man came over saying “Do you mean me? ‘Cos my name’s not Paddy”

The foreman replied “you are a thick Irishman so you must be called Paddy” and handed the young man his cards telling him he was fired.

The Irishman said “I am not thick! Tell me why you are firing me?”

Irritated the boss replied “Listen mate you’ve worked on my site for 2 weeks and you still don’t know the difference between a girder and a joist”!

The younger man said “But I do. Goethe wrote Faust and Joyce wrote Ulysses!!”

Table 2 Responses to Q15-20

<table>
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<th>Number of answers</th>
<th>Could be true</th>
<th>Makes me question my attitudes</th>
<th>Made me think about stereotypes</th>
<th>Challenges the stereotype of Irish people</th>
<th>Made me smile / laugh</th>
<th>Challenges the stereotype of Irish people</th>
<th>Increased my interest in storytelling</th>
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Q15 [This story could be true] 9 of the participants expressed neutrality Analysis suggested truth mattered differently to different audiences and settings. Consider the following exchange.

R3 In academic psychology they would say ‘that is not evidence that is anecdote’… when teaching I give examples but when teaching psychologists I tend not to….
R1  But surely that is about using stories as evidence and surely that’s not the purpose...
R6  Doesn’t matter if the research is rubbish either, so long as there is a name and date!

Q16. This story makes me question, wonder or reflect on my own attitudes. A small majority agreed although there was heated discussion drawing on personal experience, political beliefs and attitudes.

Q17. Story 2 gets me thinking about stereotypes and attitudes we have about Irish people. The majority agreed and the subject of prejudice and the group fully engaged and disagreed as intended.

Q18. This story challenges the stereotype of Irish people as “thick”. Although 14 respondents agreed the value of the story to challenge and change attitudes was hotly debated. The story was perceived as risky and needing skilful handling, timing and discernment.

Q19. Story 2 made me laugh / smile. 11 participants agreed significantly fewer than for story 1.

Q20. Reading this story increased my interest in storytelling. The highest neutral score- 8 people.

Story 3 and Q21-24

The purpose

➢ Would modelling an unfinished analogy liberate learners to make use of story form themselves?
Provide an opportunity to express attitudes to the intentional use of storytelling.

Establish participant claims to making intentional use of storytelling

Identify risk associated with storytelling

Story 3  A trainer often told jokes and stories when she was running workshops or giving lectures. A colleague asked “Why do you do that – it’s not what you are paid to do?”

She replied “well you can use a hoe to do the garden why not use stories to teach…….”

And then went on to say…….

Q21 Several people followed the model presented and responded with an analogy e.g.

R1  I use a hoe to turn over the soil, stories are the same they help people play with ideas and makes for fertile minds!

R6  A story in time saves nine… a story in the classroom is worth two in the lecture theatre!

R7  Once upon a time long ago in a workshop far away lived two trainers. The first trainer believed that her role was to cram as many facts……..

Here the expressional, imaginal form used by the formative assessor was mirrored by the audience. Does this suggest assessment stories, constructive feedback etc could be modelled in a parallel manner?.

Table 3 Responses to Q22 - 24

Q22. I make use of storytelling to help others learn. The majority agreed suggesting storytelling is widely used but often unrecognised or used as an explicit pedagogic device.

R7. I wouldn’t call it storytelling but you can’t give an example without telling a story.

Q23. Participating in this project has made me think more about the use of storytelling. 15 participants agreed and many commented that participating was enjoyable and interesting and instructional.

R3. You could definitely use this to teach teachers.

Q24. I think storytelling can get in the way of learning. A small majority disagreed. Discussions identified risks associated with storytelling for learning purposes. Groups 2 and 3 stressed the importance of training pedagogues to use stories and humour with skill and discernment. Appendix 1 and 2 are examples of instrumental outcomes of the 2001 study as they have been used to develop pedagogic skills.
R4  It (storytelling) is a risky business (q21)

And so….. (Analysis)
In the original study verbatim quotes were presented under headings derived by mapping of the work of Saljo, Marton and Entwistle (date e.g. 1992) with Strauss’ claims for storytelling. What follows is an overly simplistic representation of the findings.

- Effective pedagogues use stories?
- Story form is used for a wide range of purposes. More emphasis was placed upon, engagement and reflection than the transmission of facts..
- “Stories” include:- poetry, reference to popular culture e.g. soap operas, myths and case studies etc
- Stories can create a shared reference point and aid memory

R3 more easier to remember a story about something than just a principle for instance

- The stories illustrated clearly how individuals constructed distinct personal meanings and these differences suggested greater alignment between storytelling and constructivist rather than positivist notions of knowledge transfer.
- Discerning use of stories could help with attitude change and holistic understanding and alignment with deep approaches to and conceptions of learning - extraction of meaning, understanding reality and personal growth (Marton in Entwhistle 1992)
- Humour serves a wide range of pedagogic purposes but requires skill and discernment to avoid risks of social exclusion or manipulation
Storytelling is an art with definite pedagogic potential but the craft needs to be recognised and nurtured.

E.g. although stories are familiar to most of us there may be a level at which we do not understand the mechanisms which are operating. The use of archetype may be one which requires some level of research and learning on the part of the pedagogue wishing to increase their effectiveness. (Strauss 1996)

Formative pedagogy for sustainable assessment aligned to lifelong learning?

Examples of these conclusions are re-presented here against a selection of the points of requirements in Boud’s “Sustainable assessment: rethinking assessment for the learning society.” (2000). The language chosen by the author to articulate the essence of sustainable formative assessment is in harmony with many of the terms and concepts underpinning the learning platform model.

Formative assessment storytelling and humour (in adult education) are under-conceptualised but often recognised and implicitly used in common sense forms. Hopefully expressive study can “contribute to an agenda for sustainable assessment” (ibid p156). Note how the comment below matches constructivist perspectives on lifelong learning and development of meta-cognitive skills.

R7…. knowledge is ephemeral it doesn’t exist. Knowledge is a catalyst of understanding. Once I understand everything is in context. Facts get out of date. But a principle behind what drives knowledge that’s when the individual grows. You can make decisions because have a grounding – that’s where the story helps – catalyse information.
In Boud’s statement “The focus of assessment is on learning rather than performance” (ibid p157). ”Assessment” could easily be substituted by “formative pedagogy” since both weave new conceptions and information into knowledge, attitudes and beliefs.

Likewise “The focus is on the task and not the self – de-centering the ego appears to be a prerequisite for effective assessment. The development of self assessment is vital” (ibid).

As R14’s comments illustrates how stories can distance the ego.

All told stories. Helped me learn by taking the issue out of context so my conditioning habits didn’t get in the way of my understanding

And

I train lots of chiropractors and tell stories about dentists because then they can see it from the clients’ point of view- they’ve all been to the dentist, they see it differently and you can get access to something different

The use of stories to generate a safe learning environment – a learning platform or a “climate... in which the giving and receiving of feedback is a normal part of the teaching and learning processes and leads to worthwhile peer learning”. (Boud 2000 p157) Respondents suggested good pedagogues created a sense of safety, generated trust and seemed to be human and vulnerable.

R15 they give you a sense of belonging, ...they gave me a sense of where I was in the world and in life, I just knew where I was, which is a very safe thing to be,

R1 More comfortable ways of self examination / criticism

This sense of safety and trust in storytellers may illuminate a way to create a positive learning environment which necessitates separation of formative feedback from grading (Boud 2000 p157). Learning without fear of judgement and summative assessment. Cayote stories (the trickster archetype in native American legends) don’t
identify one behaviour as good, another as bad but shows us situations in which
behaviour gathers a consequence. (Strauss p96). A safe environment can encourage
exploration, reflection and self evaluation and create a dialogic framework upon
which to hinge new concepts, ideas and data that offers new insights. “Aha” moments
are described by Willis as “verisimilitude”

“In a text with verisimilitude, the reader recognises some of the portrayed qualities
from his or her own experiences and is thereby able to believe in the possibility – the
credibility- of the virtual world presented in the expressive text as an analogue to the
real one (Eisner 1997 in Willis 2000 p45).”

Well chosen stories might enable students to “recognise external clues they can use
to give feedback to themselves” (Boud 2000 p158)

R5 I wouldn’t say stories I’d say case studies……I use case studies to
introduce a difficult concept….We always tell stories about patients.

R10 Yes in different ways e.g. I use analogy or give examples of how things
can work in different ways (Q3)

Metaphors, case examples, stories that highlight effective or dangerous performance
by another can provide us with a reference point for self or peer assessment and
regulation. Such intentional use of what we might call professional assessment stories
can help learners internalise the purpose and mechanisms of assessment.

Allow me to illustrate with an example from my own practice. I have often used the
following tale to create a learning platform to enable managers/educators to
understand the importance of transparent standards, performance measurement quality
assurance or staff appraisal.

“A Sunday newspaper published the findings of a poll into the sexual behaviour of the
British public. The first question was how often do you have sex? Often? Rarely? or
Never. The second question was the same but asked how many times per……
Inevitably some respondents who said rarely also replied twice a night, whilst others who ticked often said twice a month”

Double duty

Boud maintains that contemporary assessment activities require us to juggle competing epistemologies and frameworks. (compare with Barnett’s definition of supercomplexity 2000) The double duty refers to

- Assessment for summative and formative purposes
- Immediate task and longer term goals
- Attending to the learning process and substantive content. (Boud 2000 p160)

Part of the solution may be to work at a meta, imaginal level applying Willis’s ideals of “mythopoetic pedagogy” which

“attempts to draw out attentive and critical reflection…. As thoughts and desires rather than explicit ideologies… through imaginal practices that evoke aesthetic and emotional knowing.” (Willis 2005 RWL)

Understanding the mythopoetic potential of stories, whether in the form of the grand archytypal myths, personal anecdotes, jokes or case studies may provide a tool for managing the competing and sometimes paradoxical demands of this double duty. It also provides a means to enhance the formative assessment practices that support students to develop self regulatory capabilities.

“the components in the teaching system, particularly the methods used and assessment task are closely aligned to learning activities and assumed in the learning outcomes.” (Boud 2005 p1)

And they all lived happily ever after? (Conclusion.)

“Two monks came upon a woman unable to cross a river. One monk came to her aid and carried her across even though a monk’s spiritual discipline requires
that he have no contact with women. The monks parted with the woman as soon as they had crossed the river. Some miles down the road the monk who had not helped the woman said to the other, “I can’t believe you broke your vow and carried that woman across the river. “The other said” I left her at the river quite a while ago. Why do you still carry her?” (Strauss 1996 p32)

The lack of literature, research and explicit recognition of storytelling as a pedagogic device may in part explain the high level of risk associated with its explicit and formal use and fear of letting go of traditional models.

R3  I agree it (conscious use storytelling in adult education) is probably under explored actually in the literature and well worth thinking about.

The paradox in the research findings (2001) was that despite all participants believing effective pedagogues tell stories it did not seem legitimate or safe to call it storytelling. Perhaps this sensitivity to the intentional and explicit use of storytelling in the context of adult pedagogy points to the need for systemic change “as tinkering at the edges is unlikely to be sufficient” (Knight and Yorke 2003 p45).

Expressive styles of formative pedagogy may be the key to deep learning allowing us to move towards “divergent assessment where constructivist approaches to adaptable processes places emphasis on student centred learning” (Rushton 2005 p 511)

The dominance of summative assessment has limited validity outside the academy where learning outcomes are rarely expressed explicitly yet learning still takes place (Boud 2005 p5). By developing the capacity of learners to interpret, design, reflect on imaginal images using anecdotes metaphors tales, exemplars, films, poetry, autobiographic details they may be better equipped for the real world. Having the capacity to continually rebuild learning platform, (perhaps from curiosity about ones
own story) might encourage learners to continue to assess, update and amend their performance and identify learning needs throughout their careers.

Perhaps we are all too familiar with storytelling, it may be universal and thus not assumed to have a special role in any pedagogic skills audit? Yet stories are central to our adult lives and play a significant part in our development. Getting staff to conform to constructivist policies and expressive models of research and pedagogy is problematic as many staff are embedded in disciplinary cultures that do not assume learning is for all (Boud. p156).

However this paper has attempted to respond to the call for re-appraisal of everyday taken for granted activities (Boud 2000) and the reformulation of specific responses to the double duty of encouraging learners to participate in their own learning and assessment beyond the formality and traditions of the academy.

R4 notion of self-reflection is a good one and I guess storytelling is a good way of doing this – only problem is that at one level people will take it at face value ... When I think of the staff I’m working with – some will see it at face value and some will see the hidden meaning. – that’s for me as facilitator telling the story making sure the others get the meaning.

R7 For me the best stories are simple. Allows me to take out of it multiple lessons. Best teachers allow that.

Boud’s 2005 paper on alignment offers 10 illustrations of ways of thinking that emphasise appropriate pedagogy and learning. Again these points reverberate with the conception of a formative pedagogue freed to make discerning use of story form.

R 4 Difficult to know where storytelling ends and other forms of facilitation begins.

Conclusion
Expressive formative pedagogy has the potential to move away from correcting to directing learner understanding (Yorke 2001 p477) by allowing dialogue and individual interpretation of ideas. Formative assessors need to be encouraged, enabled and supported to risk becoming creative and adaptable facilitators of learner centred-learning by understanding and applying dialogic tools and co-generate expressive understandings of learning and assessment processes. Expressive, arts-based epistemological approaches are coherent with constructivist understandings and require assessor / pedagogues who can develop and manage learning platforms, adopt receptive rather than a proactive positions and tolerate the ambiguity inherent in “poetised reflection”. (Willis 2000)

It is suggested that storytelling, which has previously fallen into the informal domain (Boud 2005 p 6) can know be utilised to develop more holistic and lifelong approaches to self and peer assessment and the process of self regulated learning.

R7 We look to storytellers perhaps it’s natural, engrained or genetic.

storytellers they are the pillars of transfer of knowledge

R1 Victorians turned stories into things for kids. They are for adults.

Adults have been sidelined.
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Appendix 1.

Checklist, hints and tips for pedagogic use of storytelling.

- Reflect on stories in your daily life.
- Begin to develop a cookbook of stories from your own life and learning to enhance your own repertoire of stories, jokes anecdotes and metaphors.
- Identify the different messages, potential applications and risks associated with each story. Be aware that stories sometimes contain hidden meanings, especially in relation to the archetypes we recognise through their telling.
- Observe people that are good story tellers and reflect on what makes them effective. Analyse their style and adapt to suit your own personality and style.
- Reflect practice and develop your own storytelling skills.
- Deliver stories in a ways that enhance audience understanding and recall of information & point of the story.
- Reinforce key messages by dressing them in a strong image or providing additional cues to memory by effective use of humour, voice and gesture and non verbal delivery.
- Make use of stories to create a learning platform, to convey information, to challenge and change attitudes, to engage, relax and amuse learners.
- Make use of stories to engage learners and create opportunities for constructive disagreement.
- Chose stories with clear pedagogic intention then anticipate and discuss potential difficulties.
- Chose stories that are inclusive of the audience and relevant to the intended purpose, consider the diverse background cultures and beliefs of the audience.
• Make use of naturally occurring stories provided by the media. Ensure discussion and clarification of specific message intended by their use.

• Recognise how different meanings can be made from the same story and allow time to check understanding and reinforce key messages using other methods (e.g. short lectures, handouts reading lists)

• Use storytelling in tandem with other techniques to reinforce messages, order and direct learner attention and create connections between overall concepts and principles and detailed information and data.

• Use humour appropriately abiding by Dean’s guidelines (see attached).

• Identify high-risk stories and use with discretion. Evaluate their potential to convey information efficiently and holistically with the potential of creating offence, misunderstanding or stereotyping.

• When telling stories be mindful of the significance of truth and believability. Make any story told your own, the audience is more likely to engage with a story told in your own words and purpose.
Deans cautions and guidelines on the use of humour

Caution 1
Never introduce yourself in a humorous manner, unless your reputation has proceeded you.

Caution2.
Never use humour to conceal a lack of preparation or inadequate knowledge of the subject matter.

1. Make fun of yourself not others
2. Laugh with people and not at them
3. Select material that relates to your topic or listeners
4. Believe in your material
5. Deliver your material well
6. Learn techniques for good delivery
7. Avoid ethnic put downs
8. Avoid sexist put downs
9. Give listeners permission to laugh
10. Use savers if the joke or story doesn’t work