

II. SCHOOL STORIES

Education is primarily storytelling. Every culture prizes certain stories above others and puts those stories at the center of that long process of creating citizens that we call education. Great changes in a society are always accompanied by great changes in the stories we tell, or no longer tell, in school. Our individual lives and conceptions are significantly shaped by the stories we hear and embrace in the classroom.

1. What is the earliest story you remember hearing in school?
2. What stories made a strong, immediate impression, perhaps changing the way you thought or felt?
3. Which of your teachers were the best storytellers? What kind of stories did they tell? What specific stories do you remember? What impact did these teachers have on you?
4. Who were some of the heroes and villains of school stories? Do you still see them this way?
5. What values or outlooks do you presently hold that you think were influenced by the stories you heard in school? Can you link any of them to specific stories?
6. Can you think of school stories which influenced your behavior? Your view of yourself or your possibilities in life? Your values?
7. What stories did you *not* hear in school that you now believe you should have heard?

8. What stories did you hear that are no longer being told? Which should be and which should not?

9. Describe your early experiences in reading on your own?

10. What kinds of things did you read on your own during the school years? Do you now see any significance to the stories you chose on your own as compared with the stories you were assigned for school?

11. If you had a chance now to read one story to young children in school, which would it be? To adolescents? To young adults? Why?

12. In addition to stories you hear or read in school, the school experience itself generates many stories. What are some of the stories from your life *at* school which you now think of as important?

13. Which schoolmates or teachers were important characters in your school years? What influence did they have on you, for good or bad? Can you think of specific stories that illustrate that influence?

14. Is there a discernible plot or theme to your school experience over the years?

15. Did you try to imitate in your own life any of the stories you learned at school?

16. What specific school experiences can you identify that helped shape your character in some way?

The Healing Power of Stories
by Daniel Taylor