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MINI-MANUAL

# Instruction: Stories



INSTRUCTIONAL  
COACHING  
GROUP

Jim Knight

For more detailed information regarding the information contained in this mini-manual, refer to:

***High Impact Instruction: A Framework for Great Teaching***

Chapter 7

By Jim Knight

Also view the High Impact Instruction introduction video:



**Instruction: Stories**

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# Stories

*“If stories come to you, care for them. And learn to give them away where they are needed. Sometimes a person needs a story more than food to stay alive. That is why we put these stories in each other’s memory. This is how people care for themselves.”*

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BARRY LOPEZ

## KEY CONCEPTS FOR COACHES

### USING STORIES EFFECTIVELY WITH STUDENTS

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- 1 Develop a library of stories.
- 2 Integrate stories into lessons at most effective points.
- 3 Frame stories with introductory and summative comments.
- 4 Identify learning goal, then identify story to illustrate the idea.
- 5 Be sure that students can relate to the story.

## *Turning Ideas Into Action*

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### STUDENTS

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- 1 Consider having students create and connect stories to inform their learning or to help them remember key content.
- 2 Guide students in creating their own story line and prompt them to make connections between their stories and what they are learning.

### TEACHERS

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- 1 Audio record self telling a story and then listen to the audio. Teacher can listen for content, connection, and/or delivery.
- 2 Watch others telling stories. There is much to be learned from good story tellers.
- 3 Keep a story journal.

### INSTRUCTIONAL COACHES

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- 1 Gather time-on-task data for teacher during a lesson and then examine the data during the time period the story was being told.
- 2 Collaborate with teachers to develop a story bank. Share stories among and between teachers.

PRINCIPALS

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- 1 Create opportunities where teachers can create and share stories.
- 2 Be aware that stories can have a positive effect not only on student learning, but also on the culture within a building. Stories remind us of our shared humanity.

## What It Looks Like



Teachers can assess how effective their stories are by comparing how well students remember content that they learned with the help of a story with content they learned without a story. Effective storytellers draw the listener in and inspire curiosity. Stories need to be debriefed to some degree for some learners to help them make explicit connections. A good storyteller will “set the stage,” tell the story, and then debrief the story with careful questioning.

EFFECTIVE STORIES

EFFECTIVE STORIES ARE...	CHECK	COMMENTS
<b>Not Lame.</b> Is the story of interest to students or just the teacher?		
<b>Concise.</b> Cut out every word that you can. Shorter stories are more powerful.		
<b>Vivid.</b> Have you included enough details to paint a rich picture?		
<b>Emotional.</b> Will the story touch students' hearts?		
<b>Surprising.</b> Can you make the story more effective by including a surprise ending?		
<b>Humble.</b> Stories that celebrate a teacher's successes can be off-putting to students.		

PLANNING: GUIDED QUESTIONS

HOW TO TELL A STORY

<b>WELL-TOLD STORIES ARE...</b>	<b>CHECK</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
Planned ahead of time		
Spontaneous		
Conversational		
Simple		
Short		
Appropriately paced		