



CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH
Language Assessment
Part of the University of Cambridge



Using creative stories for BE exam courses

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BESIG Prague, 2013



The impact of stories

“The best student I ever had was Gerda...”





Overview

Why use stories for Business English?

Are we teaching business story telling already?

What about storytelling in the business world?

A classroom business story – example and exploitation

Features of Business English stories and resources





Why use stories for Business English teaching?

‘We’re suckers for a really good story – it’s one way we make sense of the world around us and so turn the unfamiliar into the known and the comfortable.’

Michael Quinion

‘...human beings cannot live without them. We are burdened with a consciousness that insists on our having a purpose.’

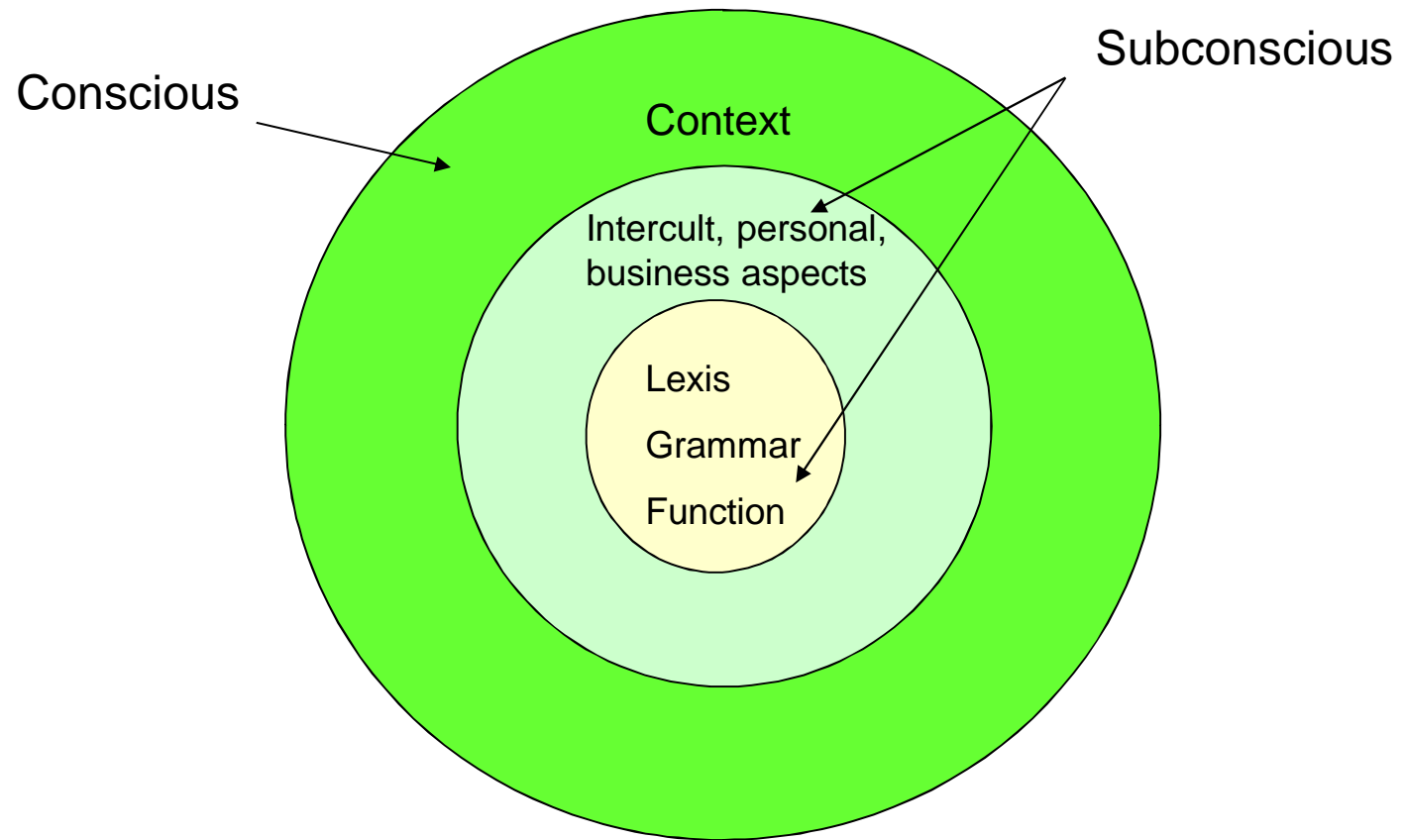
Neil Postman, *Building a Bridge to the 18th century*

‘Through stories, our values and principles have been passed from one generation to another.’

Stephen Denning, *The Springboard*



Why use stories for Business English teaching?





Are we teaching business story telling already?

Social English – yes

(e.g. *Have you ever had problems when travelling by air? What happened? How did you feel? What did you do next?*)

Story telling skills - occasionally

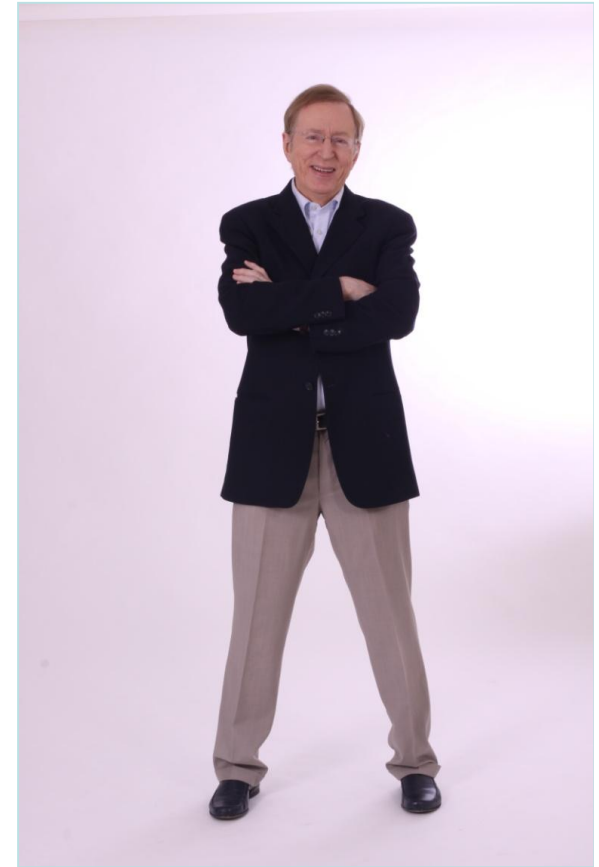
Business issues / concepts - no



What about storytelling in the business world?

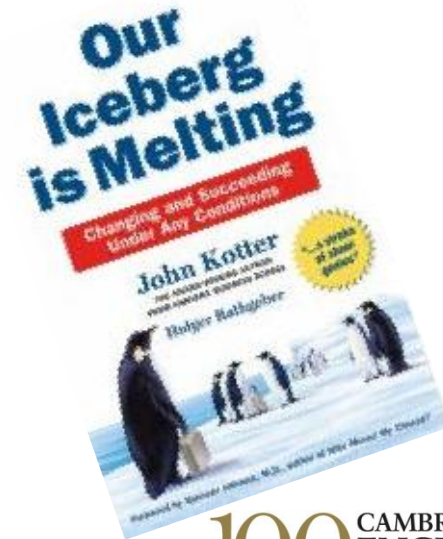
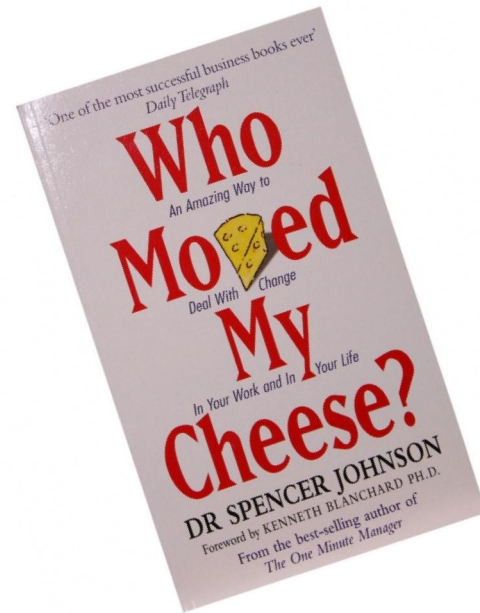
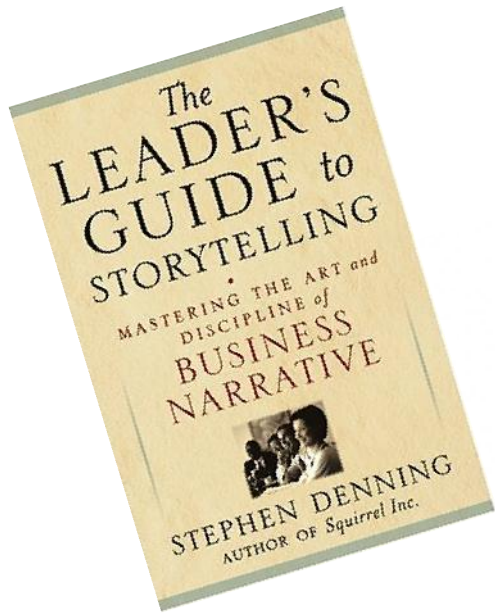
“Analysis might excite the mind,
but it hardly offers a route to the
heart. And that’s where you
must go if you are to motivate
people not only to take action but
to do so with energy and
enthusiasm.”

*Steve Denning – knowledge management and
story telling guru*





Business world examples





A classroom business story

Listen and choose the best answer.

The story is about:

- a) Diversity
- b) Change
- c) Micro-management





A classroom business story – exploitation 1

Have you had a manager like this?

What is the danger of managing like this?

Why do some managers behave like this?

How could you deal with this situation?





A classroom business story – exploitation 2

Discussion activity

You and your colleagues have been asked to advise the chief's heir how to avoid their father's fate. Decide with your colleagues how best to convince him/her.

Language box

Suggestions

Why don't we...?
I suggest / propose...
What/how about...?
Have you considered...

Agreeing / disagreeing

That's a good idea!
I see what you mean
Yes, but on the other hand...
I take your point





Features of Business English stories

Context:

Simple - one topic, one incident, one setting

The protagonist/s:

The village chief, the villagers

The challenge:

How to keep tabs on them at all times

The solution:

Tie a piece of string to each of them

The result:

The village chief is tugged in too many directions at the same time

The lesson:

A successful manager allows his /her people freedom of action



Title? _____

Context:

The protagonist/s:

The challenge:

The solution:

The result:

The lesson:





Tapping into your creativity

Where can we find Business English stories?

- Aesop's fables revisited
- Steal stories from your students

Stories for BEC preparation – what do you think?



Resources

1) Steven Denning's website - <http://www.stevedenning.com>

Article from Harvard Business Review about story telling

<http://www.stevedenning.com/slides/HarvardMgtCommunicationTellingStoriesMay06.pdf>

2) Doug Lipman, another story telling guru - <http://www.storydynamics.com/>

3) Vicki Hollet's website - <http://www.simpleenglishvideos.com/> has many examples, including one of my short stories for **Business Spotlight – Full Moon**

<http://www.simpleenglishvideos.com/full-moon/> which covers the topic of diversity in the workplace

4) Businessballs has an excellent section on storytelling, including outlines of many of Aesop's fables with suggestions for their adaptation to the business context - <http://www.businessballs.com/stories.htm>

5) James.rupert.schofield@gmail.com

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Profile – James Schofield

- London Institute of Education - PGCE in TESOL
- London Chamber of Commerce / International House - Certificate in Business English Teaching
- Judge Institute, University of Cambridge - Diploma in Intercultural Management
- Deutsche Verband für Coaching und Training – certified Business Coach
- Countries : Sicily, Japan, Malaysia, Spain, Germany
- Organisations: Private language schools, British Council, Siemens PLC
- Positions: general English teacher, Business English trainer, materials developer, author, teacher trainer, course manager, senior consultant