Risk, Reflection & Resilience: Storytelling as pedagogy

Eric Boggs MA/MS
HOW ARE YOU?

coworker
I'm so happy we both showed up here.
HOW ARE YOU?

co-worker
“Our destinies are opened or closed in terms of the stories that we construct to understand our experiences.”

—H. Goolishian,
Mindsets are stories we tell ourselves about ourselves.

We become our stories.
Stoicism:

“There is no good or bad without us, there is only perception. There is the event itself and the story we tell ourselves about what it means.”

— Ryan Holiday, The Obstacle Is the Way: The Timeless Art of Turning Trials into Triumph
“Narratives provide not only meaning but a mental framework for imbuing future experience with meaning.

“In effect, shaping new memories to fit our established constructs of the world and ourselves.”
Resilient Skill: Storytelling

“The confidence that individuals have in their beliefs depends mostly on the quality of the story they can tell about what they see.”

— Daniel Kahneman, Thinking, Fast and Slow
Resilient skills developed through storytelling

- gratitude
- optimism
- humor
- the ability to regulate emotions
- ability to see failure as a form of helpful feedback
“Tell a story about a time you overcame a challenge”
“Storytelling aids the development of personal resilience”

(p. 17). And, Randall (2013)
“The process of constructing and re-interpreting past events was essential to developing resilience”

(Hildon et al., 2008, p. 738)
Storytelling and Resilience

“narrative reflection” upon that story facilitates a greater sense of irony by affording us an affectionate detachment from our life, intensifying our interior complexity, and thickening our sense of self. As such, it renders us more resilient”

And, Randall (2013)
“Tell me a story of a time you remained optimistic despite obvious hardship”
Resilient Skill: Optimism

“Optimism helps blunt the impact of stress on the mind and body in the wake of disturbing experiences.”

Greater access to cognitive resources, Enables more productive behavioral paths
Tell me a funny story
Resilient Skill: Humor

Being able to appreciate and use humor appropriately requires:

Self-acceptance

Self-confidence

Empathy toward others.
“Tell a story about something or someone you’re grateful for”
Resilient Skill: Gratitude

Gratitude enhances well-being

Can be learned

Improves focus

Improves resilience in academic settings
“Pay attention to how you listen to the story of your partner”
“The act of telling another person the stories one holds in private is a powerful way to build resilience”
“Listening is a magnetic and strange thing, a creative force. The friends who listen to us are the ones we move toward, and we want to sit in their radius. When we are listened to, it creates us, makes us unfold and expand.”

- Karl Menninger
“By reflecting on others’ experiences of overcoming adversity, one can apply those insights to their own lives to expand their resilience and connectedness”
Two things are missing from most conversations:

“Curiosity, and a willingness to ask questions to which we don’t already know the answer”

-Edgar Schein
How did it start?
Empathy vs. Sympathy

“Empathy fuels connection. Sympathy drives disconnection.”

– Dr. Brené Brown
“If we can share our story with someone who responds with empathy and understanding, shame can't survive.”

— Brené Brown, Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead
“The gulf that exists between us...is that when we look at each other we might see faces...but we don’t see, we can’t see, the stories.”

-Neil Gaiman
“Stories need shape”
Story Spine

1. Situation: “So there I was…”
2. Challenge: “They wanted....but...”
3. Action: “And so...
4. Result: “Until Finally...”
5. Connection: “And that’s why..”