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THE ROLE OF STORYTELLING IN TEACHING MATHEMATICS

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Storytelling has been part of human social culture for more than fifty millennia and has developed from oral stories of travel and experiences through recorded stories in printed media to stories told by means of film, television and the internet. Stories are memorable, stories travel and stories fuel conversation. Stories also entertain, inspire and educate.

The focus of this talk is on the educational aspect of storytelling on a tertiary level in mathematics. The talk will illustrate what the ingredients are of a good story, when and how to incorporate story telling in mathematics teaching and where to fit storytelling into a busy lecturing schedule. The format and duration of a story is discussed as well as what resources are available. The value of storytelling on a tertiary level will be illustrated through both lecturer and student experience. Storytelling for large group teaching in mathematics is a particular focus. The talk will show how coherence and a group identity can be fostered through storytelling.

Examples of appropriate and effective stories will be given. Finally a project will be discussed in which anecdotes and stories are being compiled in a format fit for use in mathematics teaching on a tertiary level.