TALES Session Report: Storytelling as Andragogy

Date: 21 January 2026

Venue: 328, Third Floor, Block I

TALES: Teaching and Learning Experience Sharing (TALES)
Speaker: Dr. Padmakumar M.M., Associate Professor, Department of Media Studies, CHRIST (Deemed to be University)
Participants: 12

Session Summary

The TALES session opened with an engaging icebreaker where participants shared the stories behind their names. Dr Padmakumar highlighted this as a simple but effective strategy to help learners feel valued, build classroom connection, and set a welcoming tone for learning.

He then introduced storytelling as andragogy, explaining the power of storytelling to connect people, deepen meaning-making, and support adult learning. He also briefly linked storytelling to insights from neuropsychology, referring to studies that demonstrate how narratives can influence attention, emotion, and memory.

Key Ideas and Activities

1) Elements of a Story (structure)
The session discussed how stories are built through key elements such as the opening, characters, conflict/tension, and resolution/closure. The speaker shared multiple illustrative examples to show how these elements can be used intentionally in classroom teaching.

2) Storytelling across disciplines (example – "virtual water")
Dr. Padmakumar demonstrated cross-disciplinary use of storytelling through an example of teaching virtual water, connecting what is explicitly visible (direct water use) with what is not immediately visible (embedded/hidden water consumption in products), to help learners develop deeper conceptual understanding.

3) Purpose and the power of anecdotes
He emphasised how purpose-driven storytelling can influence decision-making and engagement, using the well-known Steve Jobs anecdote where Jobs persuaded John Sculley (then at Pepsi) to join Apple with the question: *"Do you want to sell sugar water for the rest of your life… or come with me and change the world?"*—highlighting how a compelling purpose can shape choices.

4) Perspectives and student voice
A key discussion point was that students need to feel their perspectives matter. The speaker described how he uses structured classroom activities to surface students' experiences, help them contribute, and gradually "meld" perspectives into shared learning.

5) Image-to-story activity (sense-making and memory)
Participants were shown random images and asked to connect them into a story, illustrating how meaning-making and memory formation can happen quickly when ideas are framed narratively.

Anecdotes Shared (student participation and transformation)

To underline the impact of inviting student voice, Dr Padmakumar shared multiple stories from university teaching contexts where calling students to share their experiences or opinions changed their engagement and confidence. Examples mentioned included:

- A tribal student in a master's class at Hyderabad University being invited to explain how he handled a real-life situation involving a snake, which became a powerful moment of participation and recognition.
- An example referenced as Dr Vagishwari Ma'am's student, who was initially reserved but, after being encouraged to speak in front of the class, later went on to do very well in his career.

Recommended Readings Mentioned

- Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High — Kerry Patterson; Joseph Grenny; Ron McMillan; Al Switzler

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CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru Central Campus

Teaching Learning Enhancement Cell (TLEC)

presents

TALES – Teaching And Learning Experience Sharing

Date: 21 January 2026; **Venue:** Room No. 328, Block 1, Third Floor

Attendance Sheet

Sl No.	Participant Name	Department	Signature
1	R. Infanta Vincy	School of Education	R. Infanta Vincy
2	Lakshmi Shankar Iyer	MBA	
3	ANUPAMA. S	School of Psychology	
4	Vigneshwaran S A	Social Work	
5	Joseph Edward Helio	English & CS	
6.	Sreelekha. K. R	School of Law	
7	Suparna Naresh	School of Social Sciences	21/01/26
8.	Shamila. N	Law	
9.	Sruthi. R	English & Cultural Studies	
10	DANIELS	English & CS	
11	Parthiban	Professional Studies	
12	Ravishankar N	Statistics & Data Science	


Let us weave stories!
A Presentation by Dr Padmakumar, Department of Media Studies,
CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bangalore
for Teaching and LEarning Enhancement Cell,
Date: 21 January, 2026


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