

# Storytellers Attack

Concept: a group of storytellers goes to schools and rushes in the class room and starts telling a ten minutes story. All kids in all of the classes, or all kids in certain groups get to listen to a story. And each group listens to a *different* story.

The students are literally being attacked, as in surprised. No one but the principal is informed about this event. Teachers are being told that 'something is about to happen' and 'cooperation is required'.

In their break time the children share their experiences. We expect them to tell each other the stories they just listened to in their classes. "Did you know what just happened in my class?" "Oh, the same happened with us!" "What did he tell?" "Wow, I heard a completely different story" "Tell me!"

Goal: to get children and adolescents to know 'the live-told story' as ancient form of communication, as source of imagination, as binding between (through) different cultures and several ages. Also to encourage children to tell stories.

Range of audience: one storyteller can tell about seven stories each taking ten minutes. This will take one school day from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. An average school class consists of approximately thirty students. This means each storyteller reaches about 210 students.

Organization: the attack can be executed as broad or small as you like, depending on the capacity of the participant group of storytellers.

We have an example of March 20<sup>th</sup> 2008, the city of Zwolle, where nineteen storytellers told their story to over three thousand children! The storytellers arrived in two limousines, a Bentley and a Rolls Royce. They were dressed up and disguised, and they were armed with flags, banners and other bells and whistles.

We also have an attack documented of a single storyteller who went simply by bike and 'dashed' into a hospital, totally unexpected, where she told her stories.

Focus:

*Communication:*

One thing remains a major issue, no matter which form you choose: communicate with the receiving schools or hospitals etc. This means: at all times be sure to make clear arrangements, use a plan of action in including the addresses and the time schedule is documented. We recommend you to contact the head teacher or contact man in about ten minutes before arrival.

In Zwolle in each car a so called Non Commissioned Officer accompanied the storytellers. The NCO made a phone call to the school just before arriving. He entered the school before the others did, and checked out where the class rooms where located.

In this way he could bring the storytellers in a second to the right class rooms. The six NCOs were being directed by a commanding officer at 'home base' who kept a clear overview on the list of schools under attack and the schools yet to attack.

Each NCO was in possession of the entire list of schools. When a storytelling team had finished its own list, it could easily take over a school from another team, by orders of the commanding officer. This is how as many schools as possible could be attacked all in one day.

*Publicity:*

Make sure to contact the press in time and leave some open space in your roadmap for moments with the press: this occurs when the attacking storytellers are about to rush into a school. This way the press has a guaranteed brilliant Kodak moment and the storytellers have their guaranteed publicity. It is also possible to let a reporter travel with one of the attacking teams.

*Catering:*

Make sure there is a set lunch time. The average income of participant storytellers usually is very modest, so it'll be extra important to take care of the inner man. A lunch break of at least an hour is reasonable, since elementary schools have their lunch break as well. And let's be honest: how often do you have the pleasure of being in a group of storytellers altogether? This festive get-together among your colleague storytellers is the perfect opportunity to celebrate afterwards with a lovely diner.

*Finances:*

Pointers on getting sponsors and state-aid:

- Go to umbrella organizations of schools

- Local government or district government, depending on the scope of your project

- Funds

- A caterer in kind

- A car rental in kind

- A loyal restaurant

*Thanks:*

*This concept is inspired by the Storytelling Razzia of the Fabula Team in Stockholm.*