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A LITERATURE REVIEW OF STORYTELLING IN ORGANISATIONS

Hanli Rolfes

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration

Johannesburg
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research report was to offer a literature review of research concerned with storytelling in organisations published from 1990 to 2006.

The review was not exhaustive, but attempted, nevertheless to be sufficiently comprehensive in order to identify key areas of research in the discipline of storytelling in organisations.

In the summary the weightings of the literary genres surveyed for the purpose of this report are indicated as follows: published books (12%), interviews (1%), academic journal articles (63%), papers delivered at symposiums (1%), popular business articles (21%) and unpublished dissertations (2%).

The main finding of this research was that extant research tended to focus on three key areas within the discipline: a) Storytelling Applications in Organisations, b) Storytelling as Research Methodology, c) Story Skills.

The weighting of combined genres focusing on the three key areas identified within the discipline were found to be “Storytelling Applications in Organisations” at 53%, “Story Skills” at 37% and “Storytelling as Research Methodology” at 10%. Given that the weighting within the readings were dominated in percentage by the primary categories – “Storytelling Applications in Organisations” and “Story Skills”, these two primary categories were further deconstructed.

No sub-categories could be derived from the categories “Change Management”, “Power and Politics” and the primary category “Storytelling as Research Methodology”.

DECLARATION

I, Hanli Rolfes, declare that this research proposal is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master Of Business Administration in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

_____

Hanli Rolfes

19 March 2008

On this _____ day of _____ 2008.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research was to provide a comprehensive, but not exhaustive, overview of literature published predominantly from 1990 to 2006 in the field of Storytelling in Organisations.

The readings included peer reviewed journal articles and case studies (81), books written with an academic focus (11), books written as practitioner guides (5), books and actual stories written as ways of understanding generic organisation dynamics (2), popular business articles (27), interviews (1), one paper delivered at a symposium (1) and unpublished dissertations (3).

An initial reading of key business journal articles available in the body of knowledge provided a thematic outline of concepts often discussed in the field. Three overarching concepts were identified: a) Storytelling applications in organisations; b) Storytelling as research methodology; and c) Story skills. In this report these three primary areas of focus are further decomposed and the research literature pertaining to the various sub-divisions reviewed accordingly.

1.1 History and background to the research

Given that stories can either be used as a means to investigate organisations (Helmer, 1993; Greco, 1996; Hannabuss, 2000; Logan, 2001; Luwisch, 2001; Johansson, 2004; Collins & Rainwater, 2005 and Lämsä & Sintonen, 2006) or as management tool within organisations (Boje, 1991a; Armstrong, 1992; Boyce, 1996; Cook, 1999; Basile, 2000; Bennet, 2003; Mead, 2004; Brown, Denning, Groh & Prusak, 2004 and Allen 2005) it is important to understand organisational studies as concept.

An organisational study is the study of individual and group dynamics in an organisational setting, as well as the nature of the organisations themselves. (Weber & Glynn, 2006) Organisational studies attempt to understand and model the many factors that come into play when people interact in organisations. Like

all social sciences, organizational behavior seeks to control, predict, and explain. (Clark, 1998:2)In the 1960's and 1970's, the field of organisational study was strongly influenced by social psychology and academic research in this field was primarily quantitative. (Bennet, 2003)

The fist account of professional storytelling was recorded in 1967 and in the early 1970's Jimmy Neil Smith called the first National Storytelling Festival to be held in Jonesborough, USA. (Bennet, 2003)

In 1975 Mitroff and Kilman published the first seminal article on the value of storytelling in organisations in the Management Review. The article was titled: Stories Managers Tell - A New Tool for Organizational Problem Solving. Mitroff and Kilman (1975) claimed that companies were so reliant on stories they could not function without them. 'Epic Myths' were a central theme of Mitroff and Kilman's studies, and they held that the epic myth has as its central purpose to uphold and perpetuate corporate traditions and to communicate unique corporate culture. Mitroff and Kilman's (1975) study is prominent because it describes a structured, storytelling event as a piece of action research and "focuses on the value of the shared stories for managers to understand employees" (Boyce, 1996:15).

During the 1980's there was a surge of interest in organisational culture, and it was also during this time that stories in relation to business processes began to draw researchers' attention. (James & Minnis, 2004)

In the early 1980's Martin, Feldman, Hatch & Sitkin (1983) established through extensive research that certain story types occur in many different permutations over a broad range of companies and company contexts. The seven story types that were identified, related thematically to personal concerns organisation members had, for example lack of control, status issues, job security.

Recent academic and popular literature asserted the effectiveness of storytelling as perhaps one of the most significant management tools of the modern age. (Boje, 1991a; Boyce, 1996; Denning, 2006a and Mead 2004)

Those who believed it to be a powerful managerial tool considered it a key leadership competency in today's business environment (Sheridan 1996). Denning (2000) viewed the effective telling of the correct story at the appropriate time as an essential management skill to deal with and achieve business results in the 21st century.

Fewer articles and books have been published concerning storytelling and story as research methodology in business. For those who believed storytelling in organisations to be an interpretativist methodology for deciphering and decoding a deeper understanding of organisational existence, storied accounts represented a unique insight into how individuals make sense of their world (Helmer, 1993; Boyce, 1996; Greco, 1996; Hannabuss, 2000; Logan, 2001; Luwisch, 2001; Johansson, 2004; Collins & Rainwater, 2005 and Lämsä & Sintonen, 2006).

1.2 Rationale for the Research

The choice of research originated from the researcher's inherent belief in and passion for narrative, story and performance. The researcher previously obtained a BA Drama and BA Honours with specific focus on live performance, theatre in education, drama in education and psychodrama.

The researcher has been a prominent television and theatre practitioner from 1994 to date and believes in the power of story to educate, communicate and entertain. The researcher also worked extensively in realms of Corporate Theatre and advertising, both as producer, writer and performer.

The researcher's background in the performing arts served to spark interest and enthusiasm for the research area, but could also be viewed as a source of potential bias. It is the position of this researcher that one's perspective both enriches and limits one's work, and that it must necessarily be reflected upon. This notion was articulated succinctly by Reason (1994:327) as follows: "Critical subjectivity means that we do not suppress our primary subjective experience, that we accept that our knowing is from a perspective; it also means that we are aware of that perspective and of its bias, and we articulate it in our communications. Critical subjectivity involves a self-reflexive attention to the ground on which one is standing."

The researcher embarked on management studies prompted by an observed lack of business acumen among performing artists. The desire was to attempt a useful synergy between the arts and business, literally between 'show' and 'business'. Storytelling in organisations offered that synergy. The notion 'storytelling' has its roots in the world of narrative and drama ('show'), whereas organisational investigation, as a discipline, has its roots in 'business'.

In the course of readings done by the researcher in the field of storytelling in organisations, the researcher noted a paucity of articles devoted to a review of the literature. This research report was an attempt to remedy this situation by offering a comprehensive, but not exhaustive, review of literature published in the field of storytelling in organisations from 1990 to 2006.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher considered it useful to adapt the prescribed format of the research report in order to illuminate methodology employed before the reader engaged with the literature review.

The research conducted was done solely for the purposes of writing a comprehensive literature review. The researcher did not aim to employ a set of

competing models or a point of view, but to conceptualize the research area, to survey and to synthesize prior research. Grounded theorising served as underlying research method. The researcher aimed to identify categories and subsidiary categories present in the literature reviewed.

This literature review had as its aim to provide a coherent conceptual structuring of the topic itself (concept-centric) and to summarize literature written on story and storytelling in organisations, with specific focus on storytelling as managerial tool. This paper limits itself to the exploration of the field of storytelling in organizations from 1990 to 2006.

The primary observations in this paper were derived from literature in management and organisation studies. This review of business literature was completed via a comprehensive search of electronic databases.

In order to attain a starting point in terms of key themes and facts within the field of storytelling an initial literature search on “storytelling” was done. This search yielded thousands of citations. The search was the narrowed to the phrase “storytelling in organis/zations” which yielded 423 citations across various electronic management journals. From academic journals, 93 articles were selected, which was narrowed down to 71 peer reviewed articles including 10 research reviews and empirical studies. Also selected for review were 16 published books, and in order to glean a complete overview of current thinking in the field, 27 articles from popular literature were selected. Also included in the research field are 3 unpublished dissertations, 1 interview and 1 paper delivered at a symposium.

After a cursory reading of the available literature, the researcher became aware of key articles often cited, and the body of literature serving this review was thus increased.

Although the selected literature was drawn from a wide range of sources, it is accepted that certain risks of bias are inevitable, particularly in, for example, the reliance on material written only in the English language

As this body of literature was progressively investigated, the key ideas or themes that emerged were sorted into broad areas of interest, which ultimately provided the table of contents of the review.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Storytelling Applications in Organisations

3.1.1 Corporate Culture and Identity

Stories are as old as the human race itself and for thousands of years, human beings have gathered in community to share their stories, to listen and learn about themselves and their shared values, and how their common values are acted out in the world (Kahan, 2001). Every organisation is a community and community is about shared stories (Blair, 2006) and the building of relationships in order to define a common ground (Kahan, 2001).

Before examining the applications of stories and storytelling on corporate culture and identity it is necessary to understand wholly, the concept of organisational culture and identity - for which a plethora of definitions exists. Martin (2006) defines corporate culture as comprising the shared values, symbols, behaviours, assumptions, norms and customs in an organisation. Schein (2006) simply defined corporate culture and identity as the residue of success in an organisation, which upholds the old adage that culture is ‘the way things are done around here’. By implication, it is the way an organisation solves problems and goes about meeting its goals.

Blair (2006) stated that whenever human beings come together for a shared purpose, such as in organisations, corporate culture emerges and is created

automatically and naturally. Fowler (2000) added to this by highlighting that corporate culture not only includes structures and procedures, but also communication and relationships between people in the organisation – which emerges as the single factor having the greatest potential to effect improvements or hold it back.

Thorsen (2006) equated culture to an energy force woven by the thinking, behavior, and identity of those in the group or an invisible bond that determines how its members think, act, and view the world around them. Corporate culture and identity can thus emerge spontaneously or be created.

Stories and storytelling relate to corporate culture and corporate identity in these two ways.

1. Stories and storytelling can create, shape and influence corporate culture and identity. (James & Minnis, 2004 & Collins & Rainwater, 2005)
2. Stories and storytelling can be used as vehicle to better understand and study organisational culture. (Brown, 1990; McCollum, 1992; Greco, 1996 and Gabriel, 2000)

Below follows two story examples to illustrate both these approaches.

The first story, related by Gabriel (2000) is the story of an incident that happened between a security guard and a department head of a multinational corporation.

The department head of sales arrived at head office for an early start to the day.
"GUARD: Good morning, Joyce. Your security pass please.
JOYCE: Sorry, I accidentally left it in my office yesterday.
GUARD: Sorry, Joyce, I can't let you in.
JOYCE: But you know me, I am the head of Sales…
GUARD: Sorry, Joyce, a rule's a rule.
JOYCE: Can you phone someone and send my pass?

GUARD: Sorry, Joyce, you're the first one in this morning, and I am not expecting anyone for another hour."
(Gabriel 2000:94)

From this short example a great amount can be gleaned and inferred about the company culture, especially when considering Brown (1990:185) who viewed stories as "critical to understanding the organization itself" and McCollum (1992) who viewed stories specifically as tools for understanding systems, structure and processes. Gabriel (2000) supported this notion but awarded stories a more powerful emotional impact by "open(ing) valuable windows into the emotional, political and symbolic lives of organizations, offering researchers a powerful instrument for carrying out research" (Gabriel, 2000:2).

The guard knows the head of department by name and knows her personally, which could imply friendly relationships between different levels of employees and management. Joyce, the head of sales, came in early to get a head start; she cares about her job and is committed to it. The guard is proud of his job, but also rigid in his execution, even though he knows Joyce he does not bend the rules; this could be due to fear of losing his job when breaking the rules or clinging to a level of power given to him.

The above organisational story reveals many organisational realities, but stories can also be viewed as "creators of organizational meaning and organizational realities" (Collins & Rainwater 2005:20). Griffin (2001) stated that although most companies look to mission statements, memos, newsletters and policy manuals to build and sustain the culture, stories are more influential than any of those.

The following story is an example of how a story and the retelling of a story can create and shape corporate culture and identity. The story about Michael Eisner, Disney's CEO, and the making of the movie "Who Framed Roger Rabbit", was related to Griffin (2001) by a Disney worker.

"*As the story goes, the film's animators had a meeting with Eisner to take issue with a complicated animations scene in the script. The scene called for the animated character, Roger Rabbit, to bump a lamp and, in turn, cause the fixture to swing wildly. The band of light cast by the swinging lamp required complex animation – pushing the skill set far beyond anything Disney had done to date.*

The animators voiced their belief that, because of expense and expertise demands, the animation "shouldn't be done" and that this part of the scene should be rewritten. But Eisner was unconvinced and asked his animators whether what they were saying meant they couldn't do it or shouldn't do it.

The animators said the animation could be done, but the time and cost required would be substantial. Eisner directed them to animate the scene as it was written and, in doing so, pushed the studio's animation limits. Eisner said this was Disney's opportunity to make a mark in the industry.

That mark was made. Roger Rabbit went on to be a financial success, substantially raising the bar on industry animation standards and firmly positioning Disney as an animation leader." (Griffin, 2001:23)

The above story permeated through the Disney Company and eventually became known as the 'bump the lamp' story – company shorthand for "describing the need to find a creative solution for a tough, challenging issue" (Griffin, 2001:24) – or thinking out of the box. Disney workers, when meeting on a challenging problem, even a problem not remotely related to animation, would talk about ways to 'bump the lamp' (Griffin, 2001). The story became part of the organisational folklore, "which consists of stories which have become part of an organization's culture and provides an understanding of the organization's internal environment" (Blair, 2006:11).

Helmer (1993) studied storytelling in organisations extensively, the studies being decidedly interpretive and context sensitive. The question arose whether a story from one company can be just as significant to another company in a different context. Boje (1991a) advocated that the impact and uses of stories and storytelling are best studied as it occurs naturally in their actual organisational settings. Helmer (1993) criticized previous story studies for making inferences about the organisational uses of stories when these stories are uncoupled from their original contexts. Helmer (1993) berated the fact that stories-as-artifacts are often, in story research, mistaken for storytelling-as-process.

3.1.1.1 Communicating Vision and Mission

When Rita Harmon was appointed executive director of Fight for Children – a non-profit organisation in Washington, D.C. area that focuses on education, healthcare and mentoring – she spearheaded the creation of a totally new mission statement. Harmon believed that the then current mission statement was meaningless. Her aim was to create a living mission which reminded and reconnected the entire organisation to the children it had helped over the years. Harmon's focus was on listening to the stories told by organisation members, stories that highlighted the role of the company in the community, stories about the founder of the organisation and especially those stories that surfaced again and again. The common threads or stories about the past became the common themes for the future. Through this process a dynamic and living mission statement was created; one which every member of the organisation could understand and identify with. (Kaufman, 2003)

Every organisation is a community and community is about building relationships among people attempting to define a common ground on which the people of the organisation can stand together (Blair, 2006). "Executives think the common ground is the company's mission statement, but that is only the beginning." (Blair, 2006:11)

A mission statement becomes memorable and powerful when it is based on the story behind an organisation (Kaufman 2003). Sheridan (1996) defined the vision and mission statement of an organisation as a snapshot, whereas a story or company myth is the "snapshot as it plays out over time" (Sheridan, 1996:118). Kaufman (2003) supported this view and explained that "[t]here's a tendency in organizations to treat strategic planning or visioning as a thing as opposed to a living story" (Kaufman, 2003:13).

Silverman (2004), Gabriel (1991), Linde (2001) and McLellan (2006) agreed that the communicating of vision and mission can be more successfully achieved through storytelling than through traditional methods such as memos. Kaufman (2003) also stated that a powerful mission statement should be ever evolving. The story behind an organization forms an ideal basis for a powerful mission statement, and these stories are ever developing, as is the vision (Kaufman, 2003).

Linde (2001) explained that traditional mission statements and value statements regularly fail because they attempt to state explicitly kinds of knowledge, which are best conveyed through stories. Kaufman (2003) propagated that the way in which organisational members are exposed to an organisation's vision and mission on a daily basis, is through storytelling. "The mission is posted on a wall or tucked away in a drawer. However it only becomes real when people push against it every day, test its reality, and evaluate their activities against it. If the organizations story is not retold continuously, the mission won't mean very much." (Kaufman, 2003:13)

Denning (2004a) stated that stories are a powerful means of galvanizing an organisation around a defined business goal. McLellan (2006) supported this belief and suggested that stories provide a shorthand perspective on organisation goals and "provide a powerful tool for stating and sharing your company's vision and purpose" (McLellan, 2006:19).

3.1.1.2 Transmitting Values, Norms and Ideals

"One of the best ways to share values is by telling a story that is an example of the professed values." (Yoder-Wise & Kowalski, 2003:37)

In his book *Forbe's greatest business stories of all time*, Gross (1996) provides a plethora of organisational narrative for passing on motivation, values, ideals and priorities. Among the most inspiring stories are how Robert Morris, the preeminent merchant of the eighteenth century, financed the American Revolution with his personal credit; how Ray Kroc used a shrewd real estate strategy to turn a faltering hamburger franchise into the McDonald's fast food empire; and how Mary Kay Ash built a billion dollar direct sales cosmetics company by preaching a message of economic empowerment to women.

By hearing and re-hearing stories like the examples mentioned above, organisation members glean the central values of an organisation through the stories that circulate (McCollum, 1992 & Poulton, 2005) and their "explicitly implied morals" (James & Minnis, 2004:24).
Poulton (2005) coined the phrase "genesis narrative" – the historical story of an organisation. By circulating the genesis narrative continuously through an organisation a "deeper understanding of the ethics and morality of a firm" (Poulton, 2005:4) is facilitated.

Ready (2002) gave examples of organisations which deliberately use stories as tool to transmit values, norms and ideals by encouraging the telling and re-telling of stories from generation to generation of employees and management. Yoder-Wise & Kowalski (2003) supported this notion and accredited storytelling as a method by which important values and traditions are conveyed to others, not only the current generation but also the next generation.

Ready (2002) indicated the Bible as one of the best examples of “how storytelling has been used to shape behaviors, cultural norms and core values” (Ready, 2002:64).

Boyce (1996) stated that the fundamental character – norms, values and ideals - of an organisation is conveyed through organisational symbolism. The symbol bearing aspects of an organisation are the ceremonies, company logo, ritualized events, jokes, anecdotes, myths and stories of the organisation. When organisation members start to tell these stories, and also tell personal stories in a way that is consistent with the organisational stories, they truly become members of the organisation, which means the norms, values and ideals of the organisation has been transferred to them. Storytelling “is one very important way that people actually take on the values of the institution as their own” (Linde, 2001:163).

Putnam, Van Hoeven & Bullis (1991) found that stories represent a symbolic reflection of the intrinsic beliefs of an organisation. These stories can be stories of success or stories of failure. Denning (2006a) took the concept further by adding that the key to the effective use of stories when communicating values lies therein that stories can not only communicate or shape values and norms, but stories can reveal how the conflicts of values get resolved.

McKenna (1999) raised questions about organisational integrity, ethics and morality and propagated that stories are the most effective vehicle for transmitting the underlying morality without explicitly stating it. Poulton (2005:6) explained that “stories about those employees who responded morally and were applauded or about those who exceeded the ethical and moral limits of the firm and suffered the consequences” frame the organization morality.

3.1.1.3 Genesis Narrative and Organisational History

Boje (1991c) identified organisations as storytelling systems and explained stories as central to all organisations. “I found that stories were not just something which people tell to others to entertain, nor just something they do when they communicate. Rather, stories are the blood vessels through which changes pulsate in the heart of organisational life.”(Boje, 1991c:8)

At the heart of every organisation lies the central narrative or genesis narrative, which defines and embodies organisational culture. This narrative is often the starting point of the organisational history, and other stories are, over time, woven around it (Poulton, 2005). From this genesis narrative a primary organisational metaphor is derived, which forms the basis of an organisation’s position on how employees should respond to conflicts, both external and internal (Poulton, 2005). The master narrative or root metaphor frame organisational members’ perceptions about themselves and their environment and guide their responses and actions within the organisation (Boyce, 1996).

Organisational stories cement the relationship between history and the present (InfoTech Advisor Newsletter, 2002). Thus, much of the organisation’s history is contained and memorized within its stories. Walsh & Ungson (1991) identified the central functions of organisational memory in which the telling and re-telling of stories stand central. Firstly there is the informational role. The organisational stories retain facts and problem solving which are used to expedite future problems. Secondly there is the control function of stories which reduces the time necessary to implement a newly arrived at decision. And finally there is the political role - information delivered through stories provides a source of power by which the actions of others can be influenced (Walsh & Ungson, 1991).

Organisational stories that are narratives of the history of an organisation contain facts and details about management actions, changes in strategy and employee interaction. These stories provide a plot for employees and suggest that if the

same action is taken as in the story the same outcome will be achieved. (Hansen, 2006)

Hansen (2006) provides a few typical plots, or story examples.

- What happens when we break the rules?
- How does the little person rise to the top?
- How does the boss react to mistakes?
- What happens when things change around here?
- What is the restructure story?

People are always reinterpreting their personal narratives and continuously draw on narratives available via the culture of an organisation (Ricoeur, 1991). This point stresses the importance of existing stories in an organisation. The ideologies and power relations indicate what behaviour may or may not be acceptable in the cultural context of the organisation (Walsh & Ungson, 1991).

Linde (2001) explained how MidWest Insurance Company enhanced their organisation through the telling of both old and new stories.

> As part of the work of inducing new agents, inspiring existing agents, and representing itself to the public, MidWest Insurance works its past intensely, and much of the work is done by oral narrative. Agents tell stories about their early days, and the course of building their business. Managers tell stories about their own career, about the careers of exemplary agents, and about changes in the company. And everyone tells stories about the founder of the company. These narratives form a tightly linked system of first person and third person narratives, which convey both the history and the values of the company, at national, regional and local level. (Linde, 2001:163)

3.1.1.4 Brand Enhancement

”The FedEx courier did not intend to go swimming during the work day, especially with harsh winds and rain covering much of Honolulu, Hawaii. However, when a gust of wind plucked a package from the back of his truck and flung it into the ocean, James did not think twice about diving in. James recovered the package and, soaking wet, delivered it to the customer.” (Hansen, 2006:1)

These are one of the many stories that FedEx posted on their website. The organisation encourages employees to share stories which put action to their motto – Absolutely, Positively, Whatever it takes. (Hansen, 2006)

Stories and storytelling are increasingly recognized as central to branding (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Fog, Budtz & Yakaboylo, 2005 and Denning, 2006a). Stories and anecdotes have the capacity to enhance and protect brand image (Poulton, 2005 & Silverman, 2004), but they also can damage or even destroy a brand (McLellan, 2006). It is the positive stories and legends which enhance and a support a brand, and build camaraderie within teams and the negative stories which do the opposite (Poulton, 2005).

Nike is a good example of an organisation which has been subject to both sides of the story so to speak. (Basile, 2000 & McLellan, 2006)

Nike is a global company able to tell its story across linguistic and cultural borders and is adept at attaching a fabulous story to a pair of sneakers. For Nike the issue is not the footwear but the story, a story of strength, success, fame, youth and triumph. The basic tenet of the Nike story is: Wear a pair of Nike sneakers and you too will be a rebel with a cause (Basile, 2000).

Although Nike’s story centers around empowering people and athletes through providing sport equipment of exceptional quality, stories came out that Nike’s

products were manufactured with the help of child labor. These stories of shocking disempowerment and abuse were completely at odds with the story Nike was trying to tell and caused much damage to the brand and the company's bottom line (McLellan, 2006).

Organisations must increasingly and actively guard against negative stories in order to protect their brand image (Allen, 2005). Google's defining story of unrestricted access to information was contradicted by Google's compliance with the Chinese Government's pressure to restrict access to information for Chinese citizens. This lowered its stock price and also its credibility (McLellan, 2006).

Consumers often buy products because of the story the product imbibes (Allen, 2005). Basile (2000) related the example of a consumer who wants to buy a wrist watch. Most wristwatches today are of good quality and can keep time accurately. If the consumer wants a watch that can keep the exact time the price would be $10. However, if the consumer is after a story which appeals to the heart, which promises a lifestyle of high status or adventure, the price can go up to $15 000. This desire for story has guided many companies to use storytelling as a means to build their brand (Fog *et al*, 2005; Silverman, 2004 and Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

People need stories to interpret and understand their worlds (Europemedia, 2003), and they want to experience themselves through the products they purchase (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Holt (2004) expanded on this idea and explained that consumers are not only influenced by branding stories but want to become part of the stories. "Customers buy the product to experience [the] stories" (Holt, 2004:36). Holt (2004) cited examples of Coke, Corona and Snapple and held that when consumers drink the drinks they are in fact imbibing identity myths anchored in these drinks. "The product is simply a conduit through which customers can experience the stories that the brand tells." (Holt, 2004:36)

Holt (2004) also explained the concept ‘storied product’ that is, a product that has distinctive branded features through which customers experience identity myths.

The market is continually being flooded with better and more advanced products, and it will be the companies which “differentiate themselves from their competition by creating stories about who they are, what they stand for – stories that appeal to the heart of the consumer” that will succeed (Basile, 2000:18). Allen (2005) stated that brand loyalty is disappearing due to the shift from economics of scale to economics of choice. The way companies can guard against loss of brand loyalty is by enhancing the customer experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). “Storytelling can be the catalyst for change, allowing your customers direct access to the living part of your organization. Telling your story compliments analytical thinking and allows customers to engage feelings, leading to loyalty.” (Allen, 2005:64)

Jensen (1999) makes the case that after the information age; the company with the best story will have the competitive advantage. The consumer will not necessarily pay for the product but for the story that drives the product and that sparks the imagination. Jensen (1999) held that the market for feelings would eclipse the market for tangible products. Just as it was the industrial society’s purpose to abolish manual labour; it is the purpose of the dream society to abolish the information society. Thus the role of the brand manager has radically shifted with the discovery of the central importance of narrative (Holt, 2004). “The brand manager must make sure that the narrative reflects what the company is delivering, he/she must create, extend and continually reinvent the brand narrative.” (Holt, 2004:219)

The role of the brand manager has evolved not only to that of storyteller, but also to that of listener (Allen, 2005). Stories reside in an organisation’s employees, customers and vendors. These stakeholders all have different stories about the organisation because they have different experiences relative to the organisation

(Denning, 2006a). These stories drive the value of the organisation. “It’s the stories that determine the outcome: are they willing to endorse you, your product, and your services? This in turn determines whether people will buy your products and services and how much they’ll pay for them.” (Denning, 2006a:45)

3.1.1.5 Socialization of Organisation Members

Organisations consist of many different people in relation to one another (Luwisch, 2001). In order to be wholly socialized into an organisation it is important for every member to comprehend the organisation as a whole – the processes and the people (Blair, 2006). Given that the telling of stories is not only a powerful means of communicating (Durrance, 1997; Silverman, 2004 and Blair, 2006) but also has the capacity to create, build and maintain relationships (Greco, 1996 & Blair, 2006), storytelling has been viewed as one of the most efficient and successful ways to socialize new organisation members (Poulton, 2005).

Story and storytelling is basic to the process of organisation socialization (Miller, 1997; Collison & MacKenzie, 1999; Poulton, 2005 and Sole & Wilson, 2005). In order to belong to, be socialized or integrated into an organisation it is imperative for members to understand the culture, and more specifically to know the stories of the organisation (Boje, 1991b; Boyce, 1996; Linde, 2001 and Rhodes & Brown, 2005). This makes sense when considering the notion that stories are “cultural storehouses for organizational intelligence” (Kreps, 1990:191).

In order to become truly part of a group or an organisation, a person learns the stories of the group (Linde, 2001) because stories do not only describe an organisation but also the members in particular (Randall & Martin, 2003). Knowledge of the stories allows a member or potential member to make personal decisions about his or her ‘fit’ with the organisation (McKenna, 1999). Hale (2005) explained that in sharing stories people connect deeply and can discern

quickly what truly matters to either party, and it becomes apparent “if we are meant to work with each other, earlier rather than later” (Hale, 2005:52).

Listening to the stories of an organisation allows members to see the whole picture (Blair, 2006). Boyce (1996) argued that the degree to which a member is familiar with the dominant story of the organisation “might indicate the member’s level of adaptation to the organization” (Boyce, 1996:6). This can be greatly attributed to the fact that organisational narratives let members gain access to deeper organisational realities (Gabriel, 2002), which in turn leads to better orientation and socialization, motivation and ultimately the passing on of heritage (Greco, 1996). Linde (2001) held that the process of becoming part of an organisation, whether it is as formal or informal member, is not only about learning to tell the stories of an organisation, but also learning when it is appropriate to tell them.

Stories help organisational members leverage the experience of others, which help them fill in gaps in their own understandings and sense making, providing suggestions for action (Boje, 1995). Linde (2001) explained that stories help members learn what events in the past are judged to have relevance to the present and what values the stories exemplify. By imbibing these values or making the world of others their own enhances moral authority in individuals (Tappan, 1991). Individuals then come to claim more authority and assume responsibility for their moral thoughts, feelings and actions and truly become integrated into a system by this process (Tappan, 1991).

Through learning the stories of an organisation, individuals learn ways to operate and cope with daily struggles within an organisation (Gabriel, 1991 & Randall & Martin, 2003). These mechanisms are framed by the central myths present in the organisation which links the individuals to the organisation and to the organisation history (Poulton, 2005). Not only do the organisational stories form employees’ organisational self-perception, responses and actions in dealing with

internal and external conflict (Poulton 2005) but the organisational stories also assist individuals to start telling “[their] own stories in a way coherent with those of the group” (Linde, 2001:164).

An individual, who becomes socialized into a system or organisation, brings his or her own stories into the organisation. Just as the organisation stories affect the members, so does the members’ stories influence the collective story of the organisation (Randall & Martin, 2003). The ‘fit’ between organisation and organisation members and the insight into and commitment to the organisation can be assessed by observing to what extent the stories of the organisation and the members’ personal stories merge (Boje, 1991b).

Managing the stories permeating an organisation is of the utmost importance, because within stories lie the motivating forces of life and core beliefs (Hale, 2005). Stories have the capacity to mend relationships, repair loyalty and trust and foster commitment (Luwisch, 2001), but can also reveal the lack of common ground or coherence between members of an organisation (Blair, 2006). This could be due to members’ unconscious memories and childhood stories (Sievers, 1993). Sievers (1993) examined how organisational members, trapped by their childhood experiences, play out those unconscious childhood dynamics at work; and he found that the workplace social system mirrored the personal social systems of its members, informed as they are, by the unconscious childhood memories. These dynamics could result in other members leveraging the experience of colleagues (Boje, 1995) or taking advantage of weaknesses (Sievers, 1993). On this count Collison & Mackenzie (1999) advised: “Our daily conversations create and reinforce our feelings and assumptions about our organisation. From sharing hopes for a new project, to critical backbiting or colleagues, changing the stories we choose to tell changes our experience of our work.” (Collison & Mackenzie, 1999:39)

3.1.2 Knowledge Management

In the mid-1990's Steven Denning – program director of knowledge management at the World Bank – had as business goal "to get people at the World Bank to support efforts at knowledge management – a pretty foreign notion within the organization at the time" (Denning, 2004a:122). Denning explained how he gave presentations, made speeches, offered cogent arguments and gave lectures, but these approaches were ineffective. Then he told them the following story:

"In June of 1995, a health worker in a tiny town in Zambia went to the Web site of the Centers for Disease Control and got the answer to a question about the treatment for malaria. Remember that this was in Zambia, one of the poorest countries in the world, and it happened in a tiny place 600 kilometers from the capital city. But the most striking thing about this picture, at least for us, is that the World Bank isn't in it. Despite our know-how on all kinds of poverty issues, that knowledge isn't available to the millions of people who could use it. Imagine if it were. Think what an organization can become." (Denning, 2004a:122)

This simple story aided staff and managers at the World Bank to envision a different future for the World Bank and the management of knowledge became an official corporate priority driven by many more stories (Denning, 2004a). Stories facilitated new ways of business thinking. (Denning, 2004a)

In order to understand the application of story and storytelling in knowledge management it is important to clarify what knowledge management is. It is not only the process of capturing, organizing, and storing knowledge and experience of individual workers and groups within an organisation, but it is also about making this information available to others in the organization (Wikipedia, 2008).

Knowledge management involves the following concepts, sense making (Eisenberg & Goodall, 1997; McKenna, 1999 and James & Minnis, 2004), meaning making (Akin, 2000), training and teaching (Gabriel, 1996 & Luwisch,

2001), learning technology (Senge, 1990), organisational memory (Vance, 1991), collective centring (Boyce, 1995) and knowledge transfer (Boje, 1991a, 1995; Helmer, 1993; Snowden, 2002, Rhodes & Brown, 2005 and Swap, Leonard, Shields & Abrams 2001).

Knowledge management is often linked to the idea of organisational learning or the learning organisation (Stewart, 2001). However, knowledge management differs from organisational learning therein that knowledge management implies a greater focus on specific knowledge assets and the development and cultivation of the channels through which the knowledge flows in the organisation (Wikipedia, 2008).

The critical aspects of knowledge management can be explained as: “Knowing that you know, knowing what you know, and knowing what you do not know” (Hannabuss, 2000:402). In order to enhance knowledge management, gain competitive advantage (Swain, 1999) and increase organisational effectiveness (Hannabuss, 2000), organisations must build up their repositories of knowledge (Stewart, 2001) and augment their capacity to leverage knowledge (Thomas, 2006). Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) proposed that one reliable source of competitive advantage is the knowledge latent within the organisation itself. Thus “listening to the stories of employees is key to unlocking the latent knowledge and tapping into the commitment gathered through the constant sharing of information and ideas” (Stewart, 2001:147).

Given that the word ‘story’ is derived from the Greek, and means knowing, knowledge or wisdom (Yoder-Wise, 2003), it is not surprising that stories and storytelling is progressively seen as crucial to knowledge management (Durrance, 1997; Hannabuss, 2000 and Kahan, 2001). Stewart (2001) explained that if organisation members can answer the question “What happened?” narratively, “(w)hat may be unearthed and learned about are the deep-seated issues (particularly in relation to processes and practices) facing the organisation

including the formal and informal, rational and irrational and emotional dimensions." (Stewart, 2001:147)

Swap *et al* (2001) highlighted the challenges of knowledge management:

> Intangible knowledge assets exist in the tacit dimensions of knowledge, built up over time in people's heads, hearts, and relationships. Knowledge management is challenging because these intangible assets accumulate in the organization through dynamic, unstructured, and often subtle processes that are not easily codified into formal training programs or captured in information systems. Attempts to transfer knowledge assets within and across organizations have met with incomplete success in part because of their tacit dimensions.
> (Swap *et al*, 2001:96)

Storytelling has not only the capacity to relay information but also know-how (Kahan, 2001). It is this unique characteristic of storytelling that makes it an important tool for communicating explicit and especially tacit knowledge (Hannabuss, 2000 & Kahan, 2001). Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) made the words tacit and explicit part of business language concerning knowledge management. Their model defined four transition states: From tacit to tacit, from tacit to explicit, from explicit to explicit, from explicit to tacit. "Narrative provides a bridge between the tacit and the explicit, allowing tacit social knowledge to be demonstrated and learned." (Linde, 2001:160) Stories do not only recount past events, but also convey the storyteller's moral attitude towards these events without having to "propositionalize ethics or specify in detail appropriate behavior" (Linde, 2001:163). Hannabuss (2000) held that the sharing of tacit knowledge must extend beyond only conscious tacit knowledge to unconscious tacit knowledge. "That is, in a sense, an area we might call wisdom management, or prejudice management, or ignorance management." (Hannabuss, 2000:413)

When the notion of tacit knowledge is used within the field of knowledge management, “it is frequently used to describe any form of non-quantifiable knowledge, particularly the knowledge about social interactions, and most generally, how a group or an institution gets things done” (Linde 2001:161). Linde (2001) held that business processes do not lend themselves readily to story making, but stated that narrative is suited to convey particularly social knowledge. This could be attributed to the fact that when telling a story “we are able to communicate more than we explicitly know” (Groh, 2006:1). Groh (2006) explained that the role of tacit knowledge has become a major preoccupation in organisations, because it is this type of knowledge which is often the most valuable. Through the use of storytelling the teller engages his or her emotions without necessarily decided upon conscious thought, and in turn the listener receives this knowledge unconsciously (Groh, 2006). This type of unconscious knowledge can be particularly problematic for knowledge management, because it is difficult to present as propositions or rules (Linde, 2001). Greco (1996) illuminated that rational argumentation focuses on clarity, causality, consistency and advocacy. Narrative logic, which combines sense, reason, emotion and imagination, can capture far more complex experiences and can communicate complex knowledge successfully (Sole & Wilson, 2005).

Most business people believe that analysis drives business thinking, because it is objective, impersonal and heartless (Denning, 2004a). Given that “our very lives are stories” (James & Minnis, 2004:26) it is not surprising that organisations look towards stories and storytelling to manage knowledge by “touch(ing) a cord that reaches the essence of a person’s being” (James & Minnis, 2004:26). Analytic business practices can become weaknesses because analysis does not offer a route to the heart as storytelling does (Denning, 2004a), neither does it have the ability to present assumptions behind beliefs and assertions without judgment (Blair, 2006).

Stories can have multiple interpretations, in fact as many interpretations as there are listeners (Boje, 1991b). These various perspectives on one story "also provide a wider and wider view of the world… and the many perspectives shines light on many more aspects of the whole than any one mind could" (Blair, 2006:13). It is this defining feature of stories and storytelling which has the ability to propel an organisation into a next level of knowledge management (Linde, 2001). Garguilo (2006) however warns that "one of the misconceptions about stories is that they are used to convey an intended message" (Garguilo, 2006:5). The same story told to different people can induce responses that are poles apart, this could either be liberating by providing a wider view or limiting through confusing organisation members by the breaking down of cohesion (Garguilo, 2006).

Consider the following story related by Collins & Rainwater (2005).

"In early May 1989, Chinese students staged a small demonstration in Tiananmen Square, initially to demand and end state corruption. In a short time however, this demonstration grew in both size and scope such that by the middle of the month, the square was occupied by a large body of students, demanding dialogue with and democratic accountability from their leaders.

On June 4 many of these protestors were shot and killed as the People's Liberation Army (PLA) fired indiscriminately into the crowd. On the following day, around noon, as a column of tanks rolled down the Avenue of Eternal Peace a young man walked to the middle of the road and stopped in the path of the lead tank. This man had a bicycle with him and was carrying two small bags. The tanks stopped. This man was henceforth called Tank Man."

No-one knew for sure who this man was and speculation started around his identity. The above story was beamed to worldwide audiences and Tank Man's heroic bravery was celebrated across the globe.

Western journalists constructed an identity for Tank Man. He was a student on his way back from the library. He had been in the square when government soldiers started shooting at the students, and now on his way back from the library he was shocked to see tanks rolling down the avenue, and decided to stop them. The word was struck by his bravery and by his willingness to take a stand alone.

This was the predominant interpretation of the story of Tank Man.

However, an eastern journalist, Deng Xiaoping, had a completely different take on the story. He viewed tank man as a scoundrel bringing disorder to China. According to Xiaoping the true heroes are the PLA, for Tank Man could not have stopped the tanks. The PLA could easily have continued down the avenue, but they exercised restraint in the face of this scoundrel's protests.

Who is the hero of this story? Tank man? The tank's commander who ordered the tank to stop? The tank's driver who might have ignored the commander's order to crush tank man? Who can say for sure?" (Collins & Rainwater 2005:18)

Collins and Rainwater (2005) argued that this fragmented and fragmenting tale provides a good example of how to seek out and take seriously, all perspectives of a story.
This tale provides a strong analogy for opinions and perspectives from many different angles, and highlights the importance of shared context.

Without shared context, knowledge or information "ceases to inform and degenerates to data or, worse, misinforms or misdirects" (Snowden, 2002:2). Storytelling enables knowledge management by providing the context in which knowledge arises (Groh, 2006). By creating a shared context "storytelling becomes the normal vehicle for accurate knowledge transfer" (Groh, 2006:2) as

opposed to reflective knowledge often found in organisational documents, that is disconnected form the knowledge-holder (Snowden, 2002). ”Before the advent of instant global communications, there was less awareness of the context in which knowledge arises. When communications were among people from the same village, or district, or city, one could often assume that the context was the same. With global communications, the assumption of similar contexts becomes obviously and frequently just plain wrong.” (Groh, 2006:1)

In this ever-evolving business world, where facts are increasingly widely available and instantly accessible, each piece of knowledge becomes less valuable, “what begins to matter more is the ability to take these facts and place them in context, then to deliver them with emotional impact” (Allen, 2005:63). Organisations which want to attain the next level of knowledge management will not benefit solely from accruing more facts or achieving more precision, “but from producing more evocative stories and rich images” (Akin, 2000:58).

Below follows two accounts of the importance of stories and storytelling in knowledge management at two different organisations. The first is purely in the form of an account and the second is in story form as told by a representative of a sales company.

Logan (2001) worked as consultant for Shell from 2001 – 2004 and explained how the use of storytelling has helped the organisation overcome barriers to circulate expertise to where it is most needed in the company. In order to facilitate not only technology breakthroughs but also human resource breakthroughs Shell looked to developing “non-technical strategies for liberating the ‘deposits’ of knowledge from either people who have information you require but are unaware you are looking for it, or from those who would typically hoard knowledge” (Logan, 2001:36). The formalization of stories in the service of knowledge management provided the platform do achieve that. The success of

Shell's Campfire stories assured its status as an enduring feature of Shell's knowledge management (Logan, 2001).

"Stuck on the motorway again. I'm told that the traffic jam is going to last for 20 minutes, so I decide to call our "What's new, what's hot and what's not" interactive voice mail system. We all drop in "hot news" in the form of "micro stories" about customers, technology and products. The great thing about the system is that we were trained to tell "stories" that are no longer than one minute apiece. Each story contains a "nugget" of useful information that I can adapt to my own selling strategies. I've also been trainee in the art of "creative swiping", that is adapting stories to suit different selling situations. This means that I can quickly convert the "story" into a successful strategy for the future.

I also comment on a story from a colleague about dealing with a particular receptionist. The more contributions that I make that others use, the better my bonus gets. I can choose from a range of rewards according to what switches me on personally.

As the traffic gets moving again, I put my tape on. This contains a range of information that helps me to do my job better, supplemented by music and humor to "oil the wheels of learning". This quarter, I've been sent a master class interview with one of our top sales reps, discussing how to overcome selling nightmares.
This is followed by a "serious" discussion with a famous alternative comedian, where he explains how he dealt with objections on the road to success. The finishing piece is a "spoof" on the selling process, entitled "The seven strategies of highly defective salespeople", where one of our company's great leaders gives us an insight into success through the medium of "failure". The bit I liked the best was strategy No. 7 - "Sharpen the razorblades". This points out that a "knife" will do sometimes! I often over-engineer my presentations!" (Cook, 1999:104-105)

3.1.2.1 Meaning Making and Sense Making

"Science has been good at generating technology, but not so good at generating meaning." (Akin, 2000:58)

Organisations seek collective representation of the organisational reality and a shared understanding to ensure that organisation members aim towards the same goals (Kirsch, 2004). Thus, when members make sense of what happens in and around an organisation in a similar or the same ways, and the sense and meaning they derive from it is shared, cohesion is created in an organisation (Fox, Amichai-Hamburger & Evans, 2001). When an organisation seeks this cohesion and actively works towards that goal, it is essentially engaging in meaning management (Smircich & Morgan, 1991).

Kirsch (2004) explained that "most employees do not need hard facts to make sense, but they need a shared understanding, a collective consciousness" (Kirsch, 2004:223) and storytelling and stories are a useful means towards this end (Smircich & Morgan, 1991; Greco, 1996 and James & Minnis, 2004).

Human beings have an innate need to order and make sense of the world around them (McKenna, 1999). In order to minimize ambiguity, human beings depend on metaphor and symbolism to make meaning out of raw data and experiences (Eisenberg & Goodall, 1997). Mere experience is not enough, it has to be endowed with meaning (Boje, 1991b) and the best mechanism to do this is through the use of stories and storytelling (Bruner, 1988) and "the use of language, ritual, drama, stories, myths and symbolic constructions of all kinds" (Smircich & Morgan, 1991:46).

Making sense of something implies that a human being comes to an understanding or makes a shift in perspective, when sense has been made the making of meaning can follow (Denning, 2000). "Organizational narratives help members make sense of the phenomena in their environment" (James & Minnis,

2004:24) and “narrative patterns give significance to our existence” (May, 1991:15). Some researchers from a background of sociology, anthropology or folklore perceived storytelling as a social and cultural phenomenon (in most cases unknowingly) used to make sense of their life, the organisation they work in and the world they live in (Gabriel, 1995, 2000; Orr, 1996; Czarniawska, 1997 and Sinclair, 2005). Through listening to and telling stories, observation, self-interaction, and social interaction, “people can interpret their organisational world, then act accordingly” (James & Minnis, 2004:24).

Emotions are tantamount to making sense or meaning (Boje, 1991b). Stories and storytelling have been described as an effective way to bring understanding to stakeholders in an organisation on a deeper level by engaging them emotionally (Bruner, 1988; Eisenberg & Goodall, 1997; De Cagna, 2001; Ready, 2002 and Kirsch, 2004) something that cannot readily be done through talks and lectures (Bruner, 1988). Fox *et al* (2001) explained that emotions experienced at work are highly relevant and may affect motivation, organisational citizenship behaviour, performance appraisal, and negotiation outcomes. Thus, by managing the emotions in and around the workplace through the use of stories, the making of meaning and sense can be managed (Smircich & Morgan, 1991). Boje (1991b:106) described storytelling as “the preferred sense-making currency of human relationships among internal and external stakeholders in organisations”.

Storytelling and stories not only have the capacity to assist individuals and groups in making sense of complexity but are also capable of challenging conventional wisdom constructively (McKenna, 1999), changing mindsets and perceptions (Ready, 2002), reframing (Mead, 2004), creating (James & Minnis, 2004), enabling leaps in understanding (Denning, 2000) and envisioning new ideas (McLellan, 2006). Greco (1996) assigned to narrative the capacity to “expand our construction of our business world to include as legitimate not only propositions and proofs, analysis and probability, but also symbols and truth, coherence and fidelity” (Greco, 1996:69). However, James & Minnis (2004) held

that although stories and storytelling can do all of the above, it also has the capacity to do the opposite. This is due to the fact that any story is open to multiple interpretations (Boyce, 1995). Thus, stories can be used to support or deny any given set of feelings because each participant and observer determines their own individual meaning to a story (James & Minnis, 2004).

Stories are not always told simply for making sense of the existing world, but often stories actually serve to create one (James & Minnis, 2004). Through the collective telling of stories a group creates a social reality, which in turn becomes the organisational reality (Boyce, 1995). Stories themselves can be created in order to "test a vision or a proposed solution" (McLellan, 2006:19) and to examine the impact the specific story had on a group of organisation members (Boyce, 1996).

Stories are symbols that represent organisational understandings (Feldman, 1990). Tacit understandings about organisational life are made explicit and represented in stories (Boje, 1991a), and stories serve as a means to pass on organizational understandings to others (Boje, 1995). In reading the following story consider "the unique role of narrative (in the form of storytelling) in eliciting knowledge in the sense-making of organisations" (Hannabuss 2000:402).

"… That March was rough for all of us. There'd been rumours for weeks, but when it came it hit George and the others really hard… [Um] of course, the company as a whole had been doing quite well – well enough in fact to open another office in the south – somewhere Guilford way, I think – and that meant - top brass knew it all along – something would have to go – it's always the weakest link. Anyway, they'd done their best, and it was February, no January, when the figures simply got up and spoke for themselves – the local guys did their best, of course, but they had no clout. And so there it was – six guys on the scrap heap, including Mary just married. Very sad but I suppose we'd better get on with it…" (Hannabuss, 2000:411)

The explicit knowledge in the story above can be clearly understood. The gist of the narrative is that a section of the company closed down. The company was doing well, but the section was not. By opening another office elsewhere the company did not help.

However, the implicit or tacit knowledge are based not only on the facts, but also on interpretations of facts and emotions. The narrator wants to give the impression that he saw it coming and he suggests that if the company wanted to save the section it could have done so; instead it opened a rival branch. He sympathizes with the people who lost their jobs and feels they did their best but could finally not continue. He then distances himself from it by the old adage “life goes on”, which indicates that it does not affect him personally and he will be able to carry on.

The sense or meaning derived from the story would differ given personal human perspectives because “what is ultimately encoded by the listener may not correspond closely to the intentions of the storyteller” (Schank, 1990:11). Listeners create meaning out of the story linked to their own contexts and also the context within which they hear the story (Denning, 2000). Given that stories are context sensitive (Collins & Rainwater, 2005) it is of vital importance that when stories are analyzed for organisational purposes they are analyzed in context, as organic and vital constituents of an organisation (Collins & Rainwater, 2005).

Boyce (1995) coined the phrase “collective sense-making”, the process through which groups derive a shared sense or meaning, or not, through storytelling (Boyce, 1995). She conducted a study in structurally closed system designed to facilitate direct observation of collective sense-making during shared storytelling. However, “(a)lthough she attempted to demonstrate shared storytelling as a vehicle for collective sense making, this did not occur in the study. When deep

disagreement between the organizational members and the president is uncovered during the study, questions about vision, strategy and organizational change are evoked" (Boyce, 1995: 126). This could possibly be attributed to varied interpretations of the same story (Schank, 1990).

Boje (1991b) summarized the core of why stories are meaning or sense making vehicles in organisation. He purported a theory of organization as collective storytelling system in which the performance of stories is a key part of members' sense making and a means to allow them to supplement individual memories with institutional memories and explained that "people perform stories to make sense of events, introduce change, and gain political advantage during their conversations" (Boje, 1991b:106). Whereas Frank (1995:55) explained that stories are not merely told for the sake of description or sharing, but that the self is "being formed in what is told."

Boje (1991b) "demonstrated the management of sensemaking as storytellers and listeners send cues and make decisions about how much of the story to tell, how much to reference, and which interpretation is applied" (Boyce 1996:18).

Human beings use stories and narrative to describe the world and to convey meanings and interpretations. Thus "organisations are described and re-described through the ever-changing narratives which organisational members inherit, generate and re-author" (Stewart, 1998:94). However, Gabriel (2000) argued that stories do not always and everywhere generate meaning because while stories are portable and travel well, they are often modified as they travel.

3.1.2.2 Training and Teaching

"Until recently, not even world-leading, multinational business cultures had considered that stories could be the missing tool from their training and development kits." (Asia Africa Intelligence Wire, 2004:1)

Only 30% of knowledge gained through traditional training courses is retained and 70% of knowledge gained informally is retained (Fuller, 2006). It is thus not surprising that organisations continually explore new and better ways of training and teaching, and training companies are beginning to devise programs that teach professionals “to weave facts and figures into a story that connects their clients or colleagues emotionally and emphatically to numbers and words” (Asia Africa Intelligence Wire, 2004:1).

The problem of ineffective training in organisations can, according to the research, partly be solved through the use of stories and storytelling (Boje, 1991a; Vance, 1991; Fineman & Gabriel, 1996; Greco, 1996; Morgan & Dennehy, 1997; Shaw, Brown & Bromiley, 1998 and Swap *et al*, 2001). Some story researchers and practitioners state more plainly the value of story, as the only way to affect effective training (Solovy, 1999 & Yoder-Wise & Kowalski, 2003).

Storytelling is as old as the human race itself and is still the “most prevalent and most powerful method to teach” (Kirsch, 2004:223), because a “great story can turn a yawny business lesson into a life-or-death struggle” (Austin, 1995:14). Simply stated, “(a) story can illustrate whatever needs to be taught” (Yoder-Wise & Kowalski, 2003:37).

Rational arguments that “appeal to the cognitive skills involved in thinking, analyzing an drawing conclusions” (James & Minnis, 2004:25) are often emphasized in training courses, but the emotional mechanisms are seldom engaged (Solovy, 1999). This is indicated in the research as the dominant reason why training courses often fail or do not have the desired long-term impact.

The emotional elements of persuasion are an integral part of effective training and teaching (James & Minnis, 2004). Abstract ideas which do not affect the emotion are difficult to imagine or remember (De Cagna, 2001), but through the

use of stories and storytelling “our brains [can] record and save those things that actually make an emotional impact on us” (De Cagna, 2001:31). McLellan (2006) refers to stories used in training and story sharing as a means of “bootstrapping on other people’s experiences” (McLellan, 2006:18). However, this is only possible when a story truly touches the listeners, when they ‘get inside’ the story and allow it to become part of them (Denning, 2000). Thus, it is important that stories used in training and teaching are told in the right manner (also see section 3.3.3 Story Performance skills) and come from a place of truth (Denning, 2000). If this is accomplished trainees can “see the topic brought to life with characters with which they identify, facing the obstacles, meeting the challenges, and surviving or failing… the story’s plot affords hooks on which to hang course content” (Boje, 1991a:280).

Stories do not only succeed in training because of emotional mechanisms but also engages the cognitive aspects of learning. Swap *et al* (2001) summarized the cognitive mechanisms in learning via stories.

- The available heuristic - When an event is made more available from memory, there is a strong tendency to believe it is more likely to occur or to be true.
- Elaboration - People reflect upon and integrate information with what they already know, they will remember it better.
- Episodic memory (recall of events directly experienced) - To the extent that the storyteller is able to provide a sufficiently vivid account for the listener to vicariously experience the story, many features of the story will be encoded in memory and will be readily available for retrieval.

  (Swap *et al*, 2001:107)

Zemke (1990) did extensive research on storytelling as an educational medium and came to the following conclusions:

- A story told aloud, compared with the same story presented as a television programme, resulted in better retention of vocabulary and concepts. The TV version showed superior results in recall of specific story actions.
- Stories told with words of high visual imagery stimulated better long-term retention of content than did repetition or rote and drill.
- Students instructed to try to visualize the action and content of a story were better able to remember its key ideas and better able to tell it to others accurately than were students instructed to memorize sentences from the story.
- Humorous stories spurred recall of the content of both live lectures and video dramatizations. Specifically, when a key teaching point was followed by a related joke or humorous anecdote, retention and understanding were enhanced.
- When students were taught principles through storytelling rather than straight exposition, they were more creative in applying them.
- Adults learned a foreign language more quickly when they were taught through folk stories. The most effective stories were simple and direct and used colorful imagery and natural dialogue, and contained some redundant story elements.

(Zemke, 1990:48)

Boje (1991a) held that better storytellers make better managers. Consider the following tale and the story the manager in it could tell to train his own employees.

“When ray Kroc was running McDonald’s from its Oakbrook, Illinois headquarters, he often drove by Chicago area McDonald’s restaurants. Usually he asked his driver to stop so he could check things out. One sunny July afternoon, they were about to pass a McDonald’s; Kroc told his driver, “We need to stop at this one.” As they pulled into a parking space, he noticed that the flowering bushes were littered with shake cups, colourful Happy Meal boxes,

messy napkins and other trash. Inside, Kroc asked for the manager. Only the assistant manager was there, so Kroc called the manager and waited for the anxious man to rush in after a speedy drive from his nearby home. "What can I do for you sir?" the manager asked Kroc. Kroc led him to the parking lot, "Look! We don't want trash around our sites." So all three – driver, manager and Ray Kroc – worked together to pick the trash out of the bushes. You'd better believe there was never again trash in the parking lot of that location!" (Morgan & Dennehy, 1997:494)

3.1.2.3 Learning and Unlearning

Learning in organisations comprises the following types of learning: formal learning (Swap *et al*, 2001) and informal learning (Larson, 1991 & Orr, 1996). Both formal and informal learning can occur on a collective level - organisational learning - (Zemke, 1990; Morgan & Dennehy, 1997; Cook, 1999; Kirsch, 2004; Kahan, 2006 and Development and Learning, 2003), or on an individual level (Vance, 1991 & Bell, 1992).

On an individual level "people anticipate learning from stories because that is how their earliest learning occurred" (Yoder-Wise & Kowalski, 2003:41), but on organisational level learning is often locked into the rigid grip of theory, and relies almost entirely on analytic thinking and formalized processes (Denning, 2006a). Informal learning mostly occurs though the spontaneous telling and retelling of stories (Denning, 2000). Formal learning structures have only recently started including storytelling as method for experiential learning (Gold & Holman, 2001) due to the fact that stories "make differences and similarities obvious and negotiable, and organisational players become more open to understanding each other, themselves and the organisation as a whole" (Lämsä & Sintonen, 2006:108).

Kirsch (2004) explained that "(o)rganizational learning requires that individual experience become collective knowledge" (Kirsch, 2004:23). The importance of

individual learning becoming organisational knowledge was supported by Randall & Martin (2003) who asserted that organisational learning compounds when members can call on previous learning, wisdom and discernment of other members. It is often through storytelling and stories that this occurs. “Without stories crucial yet intangible life lessons might otherwise be lost to future generations who experience similar setbacks and situations.” (Randall & Martin, 2003:48)

Unlike conventional lectures, stories have a way of “circumventing the mind’s logic to capture imagination, and lead to learning” (Bell, 1992:53). Thus, the benefit of stories as learning aid lies therein that stories are vivid, engaging, entertaining, and more easily related to personal experience than rules or directives (Swap *et al*, 2001), it “can slide into our minds” (Denning, 2006a:1), it helps us understand our world (Ricoeur, 1991), can “emphasize shades of meaning and feeling often left hidden or inadequately expressed in didactic forms of communication” (Garguilo, 2006:6) and it has the capacity to access and engage human emotion (Abma, 2003 & Denning, 2004a). Stories also have the ability to allow people to learn by vicariously living experiences of others through “simulating similar feelings and responses on a neurological level” (Poulton, 2005:6). Szulanski (1996) called the knowledge acquired by learning through stories ‘sticky knowledge’.

The research shows that shared stories and storytelling do not lend themselves equally well to transferring different kinds of knowledge (Swap *et al*, 2001 & Linde 2001). The technical content of work, critical skills, including deep knowledge of content domain, would be very difficult to transfer via stories (Linde, 2001). “For such concrete forms of knowledge, people rely on formal education, apprenticeships or mentoring, training programs, and self-study for mastery” (Swap *et al*, 2001:104). Swap *et al* (2001) expressed that they know of no studies where critical skills have been transferred by stories. However, the use of stories to communicate managerial systems has been observed, but the

examples stated were mostly in the form of stories warning about previous mistakes (Swap *et al*, 2001).

Learning in organisations often happens informally (Brown, 1990; Larson, 1991; Orr, 1996; Cook, 1999; Linde, 2001 and McLellan, 2006) through the “grapevine” (Cook, 1999). Although the ‘grapevine’ is mostly viewed as an unhelpful gossip machine, it has the capacity to easily and efficiently transfer knowledge and facilitate learning (Cook, 1999), because “stories facilitate the development of bonds between people, thereby maximizing the informal channels of communication” (Garguilo, 2006:6).

Informal discussions at work are often perceived as down-time, but organisations are increasingly becoming aware that discussions around the water cooler or in the canteen are valuable opportunities for knowledge sharing (Linde, 2001) and represents an important part of an organisation’s intellectual capital (Cook, 1999). Brown *et al* (2004) pointed out that these kind of informal discussions should be viewed as social learning units, and Cook (1999) suggested that any organisation serious about the compounding of learning within the organisation “should find ways of facilitating the ‘underground’ network without formalizing it” (Cook, 1999:103).

The most extensive study on informal technical content transfer found in the research, was a study conducted on a group of photocopy repairpersons (Orr, 1996). “The leadership [at Xerox] recognized that technicians were using their coffee breaks to share war stories and problem solutions, so they tried to encourage this behaviour. Other organizations might have perceived only that the technicians were taking long coffee breaks and sought to tighten control, thereby losing this important communication channel” McLellan (2006:18). Orr (1996) found that the stories the repairpersons shared facilitated multiple perspective taking and aided in the creation of intelligible solutions to problems. However, Linde (2001) held that the shared stories and subsequent shared

knowledge remained within a “small and immediate group of people who do that particular work – a face-to-face community of practice” (Linde, 2001:164). As a consequence the knowledge attained through the informal transfer of technical knowledge “lives and dies with the team members” (Linde, 2001:164).

Cook (1999) noted that organisation members who do not participate in the informal structures, do not have access to the learning opportunities within the these structures, and cited an example of a company which offered small financial incentives to employees to go to the pub for networking purposes.

During an in-depth study and storytelling workshops, conducted over a period of 14 months at various health care organisations dealing with palliative care for cancer patients, Abma (2003) attempted to establish the meaning and value of storytelling within the context of organisational learning (Abma, 2003). The project consisted of three phases:

Phase 1: Collecting a broad variety of stories from many different stakeholders.
Phase 2: Identifying canonized and counter stories.
Phase 3: Storytelling workshops.

Based on the principle that learning is triggered by the confrontation with different perspectives, different combinations of stories were presented to the participants. The multiplicity embedded in stories enabled the listeners and narrators to retell a story and derive meanings from it that are relevant to their own social context. Abma (2003) found that learning through storytelling cannot be designed in advance due to the fact that it is dependant on the stories emerging. Focus is then brought into the process by selecting certain stories to which participants respond.

> When one aims to foster a learning process it is helpful to select stories that bring participants into contact with ‘counter stories’.

> Counter stories are stories that do not have much weight within the dominant organization culture or they are given equal weight but by a subgroup or subculture within the organization.
> (Abma, 2003:224)

These stories serve to confront participants with new experiences and perspectives, and can stimulate a process of reflection and learning.

In order for storytelling workshops to facilitate learning, all stake holders must be involved - workers, management, consumers, citizens or clients. The learning is thus anchored in the entire community surrounding the organisation (Abma, 2003).

The rate at which organisation members or an organisation learns – albeit formal or informal – and the ability to react more quickly than its competitors is a tremendous source of competitive advantage (Stewart, 2001). Given the accelerating environmental transformation, organisations must not only focus on learning but also on unlearning (Damasio, 2000).

The researcher could not find any reference which expounded how storytelling could specifically aid in the process of unlearning. This could be a possible area for further research.

3.1.2.4 Problem Solving and Decision Making

“It was just another Tiger basketball game with Billy on the bench, so at halftime, knowing his son was not likely to see any playing time, his father had seen enough and left for home. The visiting Raiders had gained a 27-point advantage over the home-team Tigers, thanks to their dominant 7-foot center, who could easily score each time his outside players hit him with a high pass.

Ten minutes down the road, Dad turned on the radiobroadcast of the game as the second half began. To his amazement, he heard that his 5'11" son had checked into the game as center. In a panic, he turned the car around and made for the gym. Within two blocks, Billy had been called for a foul. His father cringed and pounded the steering wheel. He had always preached the importance of conservative play if the opportunity to play ever arrived.

Stopped at a red light a few blocks later, he heard his son committed a second foul. His knuckles grew white as he gripped the wheel and screeched away from the light. The coach was sure to pull Billy from the game before he could even get back to the gym. By the time he got his car parked, the announcers incredulously reported that Billy had committed a third foul and was now on the floor in a fight with the opposing center.

Dad broke through the double doors just in time to see both players tossed from the game. By now, the Tigers were 30 points down, but the home crowd was energized by the on-court skirmish. As Dad sat down dejectedly, he watched as the home team cut the lead to 20 over the next three minutes, and eventually went on to win the game.
*What Dad didn't know was that the coach had chosen Billy to help him pull off an unconventional strategy. His assignment was to do everything he could to provoke the standout player into a fight. Billy threw himself wholeheartedly into the job, hacking and stomping on the big man's feet at every turn until he needled him into anger. The Tiger's, who had only sacrificed a bench player, went on to defeat the Raiders, who had lost their key player and had no backup strategy." (*James & Minnis, 2004:29)

The major thrust of this story points out the danger of having only a single strategy, but can be used for a variety of outcomes (James & Minnis, 2004). The above story is an example of a story that could be told in an organisational meeting which has the capacity to encourage 'out-of-the-box' thinking during

decision making or problem solving sessions. Most people have been, at some point in their lives, in Dad's or Billy's position. While hearing the story both the listener's reason and emotion is impacted upon (McKenna, 1999). The listener wants Billy to do well, to be the hero, save the team, but remains aware of the fact that he is mostly on the bench and has a small physique. The instinctive line of thought would be for the listener to wish that Billy hits a couple of home runs and is carried shoulder high from the field. Billy does indeed save the day, but in a completely different manner to what the listener anticipated. After hearing this story the listeners can begin to think about stories from their own lives and environments which are similar to Billy's story – stories of how the desired outcome was achieved, but in a completely different manner than anticipated. Denning (2000) calls such stories 'springboard stories' because it provides a platform from which group members can start thinking in new ways when working towards solving problems or making decisions.

The terms problem solving and decision making are often interchangeable (Huitt, 1992). In order to "perceive and resolve a gap between a present situation and a desired goal, with the path to the goal blocked by known or unknown obstacles" (Huitt, 1992:35) a series of decisions are required. Storytelling can assist in a two-fold manner, during the perceiving phase and the resolving phase.

Firstly by making the team or members aware of what goes on beneath the surface "because [stories] draw on the unconscious qualities that permeate the firm" (James & Minnis, 2004:28), develop the ability of members to reflect (McKenna, 1999), decreases abstraction (Weick & Quinn, 1999) and "are part of the battle to interpret and thus influence what goes on consciously and unconsciously in the decision process" (Feldman, 1990:813).

Secondly, stories assist in dreaming up different ways to overcome the perceived obstacles through story-sharing (Barton-Leonard, 1992). A good example of such a story is cited by Barton-Leonard (1992). The story is often used at Chaparral

Steel to communicate to organisation members that creativity is supported at Chaparral Steel and to encourage members to think in unconventional ways, without fear of punishment, when trying to solve a problem. Below is the gist of the story.

"A mill superintendent at Chaparral Steel championed a very expensive magnetic arc saw for trimming finished steel beams. The resulting magnetic fields attracted bits of metal and persistent engineering attempts failed to correct the problem. The saw was ultimately replaced but the superintendent was promoted to vice president of operations." (Barton-Leonard, 1992:119)

Using storytelling and narrative, as opposed to only quantitative data, in decision making processes with large groups can enhance decision outcomes because storytelling increases the ownership of ideas (Shaw *et al*, 1998 & Weick & Quinn, 1999). Storytelling however, is not intended to replace critical thought, but the power of narrative lies in its ability "to supplement and augment rational analysis by giving focus and a human touch" (Info-Tech Advisor Newsletter, 2002:2).

Swap *et al* (2001) cites one instance where stories and storytelling did not enhance decisions making processes, but inhibited it, due to the fact that "management failed to recognize the power and persistence of negative stories, and therefore missed an opportunity for progress" (Swap *et al*, 2001:105).

The Info-Tech Advisor Newsletter (2002) provides a hands-on practical storytelling action plan for managers and leaders to make sense of and lend insight during turbulent times which commonly bring about important decision processes.

1. Diagnosis: Identify current situation or problem as something you have dealt with in the past. Relay this to employees, tell of prior successful resolutions and provide a plan for tackling the issue.

2. Interpretation: Explain how you slew the beast, and use power of metaphor. Metaphors are a staple of narrative because they cement the relationship between history (your story) and the present.
3. Adaptation: Now that you have a captive audience, associate your story with a grand event where adversity was overcome. Demonstrate to your staff how unexpected near catastrophes can be forged into new opportunities through willingness to adapt.
4. Interaction: Encourage employees to tell their own stories. Sharing will build trust among the team if each member acknowledges that they are all on common ground.

(InfoTech Advisor Newsletter, 2002:2)

3.1.2.5 Innovation and New Product Development

"At Patagonia, an outdoor-sports apparel company in Ventura, California, customer storytellers surf at the "Point", right outside the front door of headquarters. Founder Yvon Chouinard, who spends at least six months as year at the ends of the earth testing his company's gear himself, has made a point of hiring several of these customers so they could share their war stories in-house. He refers to them affectionately as his "dirt bags", people who spend so much time outside that it shows under their finger nails.

The dirt bags help drive product development. A few years ago, for instance, Bob McDougal, a resident water sports expert, flipped his craft on a stretch of British Columbia. Everything in the boat, including his shoes, went rushing down the river. He managed to swim to the riverbank and then realized he was going to have to climb out of the canyon and hike eight miles back to his car – barefoot. He made it back in one piece, driven mostly by the urge to design the ultimate canyon-climbing, mountain-hiking, waterproof river shoe." (Lieber & Davis, 1997:4)

The strategy of soliciting true tales from customers about how they live and use their gear, kept Patagonia clothing manufacturer ahead of the demand curve by providing their customers with what they really needed and wanted (Lieber & Davis, 1997).

The dominant surge (theme) in the research referring to storytelling as a means to aid and improve innovation, referred to the eliciting of stories from customers and stakeholders as key (McWhinney, 1995; Buckler & Zien, 1996; Julie, Gerard & Heinzen, 2002; Snowden, 2002; Brown *et al*, 2004 and Denning, 2006b). Kelly (2005) on the other hand explored the use of stories and storytelling within decision making teams as such, and Buckler & Zien (1996) and Denning (2000) combined these two strategies, but in different ways. Denning (2000) developed a program to use stories to help professionals envision and test how to implement programs across the globe. Stories were harvested from stakeholders and used in workshops, and workshop attendants were also encouraged to share their own stories. Buckler & Zien (1996) conducted a study to determine why certain companies remain highly innovative and do not stagnate and decline. In-depth interviews were conducted within these companies and principle insights came from the stories interviewees told. One of the insights gained was that the leaders of these companies use storytelling for “providing context and communicating a dynamic vision” (Buckler & Zien, 1996:391).

Stories and storytelling engages the heart and the emotions and “when passion and responsibility are linked, an opening is created for innovation and getting things done” (Allen, 2005:64). Given that “innovation breeds on the connections between things” (Denning, 2006a:1) the power of storytelling in assisting to grasp the inter-relatedness of things in the world and connecting them in new ways becomes apparent (Denning, 2006a). Stories with emergent themes and metaphors can be used as filters, which aid decision makers in gaining new insight for innovation (Snowden, 2002) and can also give permission to explore uncomfortable or controversial topics (Kelly, 2005) and force innovators and

designers to “think in the way users act – not rationally, but impulsively and emotionally” (McLellan, 2006:20).

Traditional market research cannot supply detailed information on what customers want, whereas stories and storytelling probes deeper and can elicit how customers feel and what they truly desire (Lieber & Davis, 1997).

Below are two examples of how customer stories can be a source for inspiration, which leads to greater creativity among organisation members, which in turn facilitates innovation (Kelly, 2005) and how consumer stories directly aided new product development (Lieber & Davis, 1997).

Medtronic is a global leader in medical technology and is celebrated for its product development and consistently high growth. At Medtronic culture is reinforced with straight-from-the-heart storytelling from patients about how products changed or even saved their lives. These stories are documented and supplied to employees “as a source for re-inspiration at work” (Kelly, 2005:11).

Kimberley-Clark built a new $500 million diaper market using in-depth research eliciting stories form customers. They listened to the stories of frustrated parents who were toilet-training their toddlers, then created the Pull-Ups training togs that revolutionized the diaper market (Lieber & Davis, 1997).

3.1.3 Change Management

“*The young Presbyterian minister looked out on his congregation with satisfaction as he noted the apparent enthusiasm in their faces. He had expected the subject of his sermon – change – to ruffle some feathers and he had embarked on it this morning with no small degree of consternation. He had just finished outlining his new initiatives for the church and, to his delight and surprise, his established (some would say mulish) congregation looked to be responding enthusiastically. Emboldened, he decided to go a step further than he had planned for the*

morning by asking his parishioners to signify their individual readiness for the fresh ideas. "If you're with me," he enthused, "get up and move to a different pew and take a look at things from a whole new perspective." The response: no movement, except for some head shaking and even a little vocal refusal. One congregant's declaration captured the sentiment of the group in a nutshell: "I'm all in favor of the church making changes, but that doesn't mean I want to change." (James & Minnis 2004:28)

Successful change within any organisation requires new behaviour from all organisation members (James & Minnis, 2004). The most common misconception about organisational change is that when you tell people the reasons for change things will change (De Cagna, 2001). Change initiative consultants and management often fall in to the "just tell them" trap (Adamson, Pine, Van Steenhoven & Kroupa, 2006) which assumes that employees totally accept the decisions made by top management and merely informing employees will bring about the desired change (Adamson *et al*, 2006). Talk of change often brings about reactions of anger, fear, denial, suspicion, anxiety (James & Minnis, 2004) and discomfort (Kaufman, 2003) resulting in "lack of employee commitment which is one of the main reasons change programs fail" (James & Minnis, 2004:28). This occurred "particularly in organisations that have long proud histories marked by little change" (Kaufman, 2003:12).

Lack of stakeholder buy-in is not the only reason change initiatives may fail. Corporate makeovers often fail because the "only a thin slice of organisational variables were considered (Collins & Rainwater, 2005), or "implementation is fragmented and things are out of alignment" (Sheridan, 1996:117) or it is characterized by abstract discussions and clinical analysis which renders it weak in term of its practical application (Collins & Rainwater, 2005). "In abstract discussions, ideas come at us like missiles, invading our space and directing us to adopt a mental framework established by another being, and our option boil

down to accepting or rejecting it, with all the baggage of yes-no-winner-loser confrontations" (Groh, 2006:1).

Recent research has illuminated the capacity for stories and storytelling to overcome these obstacles encountered during change initiatives (Sheridan, 1996; Kaufman, 2003; James & Minnis, 2004; Groh, 2006 and Adamson *et al* 2006) and progressively more storytelling practitioner and researchers regard storytelling and stories not only as an important tool in change management, but as fundamental to successful change initiatives (Buckler & Zien, 1996; Ramsey, 1998; Silverman, 2004; Adamson *et al*, 2006; Collins & Rainwater, 2005; Brittain, Swain & Simpson, 2005 and Kahan 2006).

"Time after time, when faced with the task of persuading a group of managers or front-line staff in a large organization to get enthusiastic about major change… storytelling was the only ting that worked," argues Stephen Denning, former program director, knowledge management at The World Bank (Kahan, 2001:26). Adamson *et al* (2006:41) added to this in saying: "If you want your change message to actually take hold – if you want to transform how things are done in your world – then weave your message about the new strategy into a compelling and memorable story. When more leaders immerse their employees in compelling and inspirational strategy stories, more companies will thrive happily ever after."

A Large part of working creatively with change is being able to visualize scenarios for the future (Collison & MacKenzie, 1999:39), not only focusing on charts and numbers (Brittain *et al*, 2005). Stories and narrative "comes at us collaboratively inviting us gently to follow the story arm-in-arm with the storyteller. It is more like a dance than a battle" (Groh, 2006:1).

When an organisation identifies the need to move from one state to a new state of being, the people within the organisation, by implication, must move as well

(Sheridan, 1996) and for this to be accomplished not only the intellect, but also the emotions of people have to be accessed (James & Minnis, 2004). Sheridan (1996) advocated a holistic approach to major change efforts in organisations – transformational integration – and subsequently applied storytelling to change every message, every cue that people get in the organisation. Traditional change efforts have "too many holes in the story describing how organizations and people get from here to there" (Sheridan, 1996:117).

The first step towards successful change is to help members of the organisation understand the process (Brittain *et al*, 2005) but it is as important that the members themselves feel understood and heard (Simmons, 2001). By encouraging storytelling among clients, employees and management and determining the precedent stories, sense can be made of changes, or the stories emerging can even help to decide unfolding changes (Boje, 1991c). Boje (1991c) also stressed the importance of inviting stories to be told by people whose voices are not being heard in the organisational dialogue about unfolding changes.

Stories and storytelling are ideally suited to assisting and implementing change because of the persuasion power inherent in stories (James & Minnis, 2004). Stories can trigger emotions and have the ability to influence the intellect because emotions are more strongly related to physiological responses than the intellect, so emotions are more likely to lead to action (James & Minnis, 2004). Aristotle defined the three pillars of persuasion, logos – which appeals to the intellect, pathos – which appeals to the emotions, ethos – which reflects the credibility of the persuader (James & Minnis, 2004). All three these elements have to be activated in order to assure persuasion, and stories are ideally suited to this end. "A well-timed, well-aimed story can trigger emotions that transform an employee's point of view and motivate the desired action" (James & Minnis, 2004:28).

Numerous examples of organisations which used storytelling to successfully affect or enhance change initiatives were found in the research body such as The World Bank (Denning, 2000), Peace Corps, National Institute on Aging, Fulbright Association, Centre for Association Leadership (Kahan, 2006), SellCo (Johansson, 2004), San Juan Medical Centre (Adamson *et al*, 2006) and Continental (Development and Learning, 2003), Disney (Boje, 1991c) to name but a few.

Below follows one example of the success achieved within an organisation when storytelling was used to change an organisation around.

"San Juan Regional Medical Center was taking lots of financial hits; our earnings were down; our hospital-sponsored health plan was going bankrupt; unions were trying to organize our nurses; and we were making many operational and management changes that introduced lots of anxiety. It seemed like everything we talked about was negative, one problem after another." (Adamson et al 2006:37) A group of top leaders, directors, board members and physicians were assembled to develop a comprehensive strategy that would change the company's business model. Thus, "a new mission, vision and philosophy were developed, a new personalized benefit program put in place, and a completely new healing environment designed into the facility expansion project. Many other initiatives were readied while the rollout of the first phase of changes was begun. And then something quite unexpected happened. The hard work, careful planning, and the innovative design – all of it resulted in confusion, not cohesion (Adamson et al 2006:38)".

"A comprehensive storytelling program describing the future of San Juan Regional – "Raiders of the lost Art" was developed and put into practice by storytelling specialists. After implementation of the program "the connection between management and employees changed. Skepticism, fear, and apathy were replaced by understanding, excitement, and a sense of partnership.

According to both soft and hard measures, morale improved, staff-turnover plummeted, and employee satisfaction scores climbed dramatically. New initiatives were understood and embraced."

After experiencing the success of 'Raiders of the lost Art' a second story was immediately prepared and told – 'The Riddle of the Sphinx'. This story comprised of a number of riddles, which plague the healthcare industry, to be solved by employees. "A Disney-esque pre-show and post-show video was produced to engage employees in the storyline before the work began and to summarize the story's key moral once it was over." (Adamson *et al*, 2006:40)

Given the success of these stories, San Juan Regional Medical Centre subsequently "committed to this type of storytelling and feedback to be done every 18 months" (Adamson *et al*, 2006:39).

Organisations which have successfully used storytelling as change mechanism, realized the importance of continuing the storytelling process (Brittain *et al*, 2005; Adamson *et al*, 2006 and Kahan, 2006). Kolb (2003) expounded that too often change consultants implement a change initiative, and soon after the consultant left, old patterns began to emerge, and the organisation fell back to previous procedures and behaviours.

Kolb (2003), when consulting a can manufacturing company in a time of radical change, used an entirely new approach, and put as central a concept called 'continuity' as opposed to focusing on 'change'. Continuity is "the connectedness over time among organizational efforts and a sense or experience of ongoingness that links the past to the present and the present to future hopes and ideals" (Kolb, 2003:180). Kolb (2003) suggested and used storytelling as means to use rather than discard or deny the stories, traditions and shared meaning of the organisations past. Stories were shared in groups of about thirty about the history of the company which eventually resulted in a collective story

about the company. The history of the company was re-discovered and newer workers came to realize that the change initiative was indeed not such a radical change. This notion was supported by Kaufman (2003) who also held that stories help people understand that moving forward does not mean dishonoring the past.

3.1.4 Power, Politics and Leadership

The success of any organisation lies therein that all members aim towards the same goal or live the same story (Boje, 1991c). Within the process of aligning the organisation politics occur - decisions are made, rules for group behaviour are established, competition for positions of leadership is regulated and the disruptive effects of disputes are minimized (Nathan, 2006).

Aristotle defined politics quite simply as the philosophy of human affairs (Swanson, 1991), and given that organisations are made up of a people in relation to one another, politics are part and parcel of any organisation. Deetz & Mumby (1990) explained that “the modern organization is potentially a site of struggle by numerous competing interests” (Deetz & Mumby, 1990:29).

When considering organisational politics, the question of power, or the possession of controlling influence or leadership (WordNet, 2006), is raised inadvertently and both the cohesive and divisive elements within an organisation become apparent (Helmer, 1993).

Greco (1996) and Simmons (2001) were of the opinion that storytelling is one of the best-suited means to understand organisational politics, due to the power of stories to influence. “Working in the realm of influence, as politics does, requires reading and listening between the lines as a prelude to taking risks based on our hypotheses and attributions. It is about character analysis and motives… it is about conflict, turning points, consequences, denouements” (Greco, 1996:49).

Feldman (1990) looked at several ways that stories are politically operative in creating or prescribing standards in organizations. McCollum (1992) contended that stories can indicate and determine power and Rhodes & Brown (2005) wrote extensively on storytelling and organisational power and politics. McKenna (1999) held that stories could create a climate of empowerment.

Stories and storytelling have the capacity to incorporate the multifaceted and frequently conflicting nature of company practices and actions in a politically acceptable way (Feldman, 1990). Storytelling creates and sustains symbolic oppositions that enable members to position themselves and others in the organization but also questions the lines along which organisations are stratified, “storytelling serves to stratify the organization along lines of power and authority, gender and ethics” (Helmer, 1993:34).

It is the business of leaders to steer and guide an organisation and its members towards a desired goal. It is often the case that leaders are “better at analytic business skills than they are at using narrative as communication tool” (Denning, 2006a:43) therefore leaders must learn to cultivate storytelling as business tool to influence (Boje, 1991c; Collison & MacKenzie, 1999; Denning, 2000; Gabriel, 2000; Swap *et al*, 2001 and Blair, 2006) and ignite action (Denning, 2000). As leader, “one of your roles is to serve as the constant communicator of what your organisation is trying to achieve [and] by integrating stories into what you say, you can do much to get your message across vividly” (Silverman, 2004:46).

In their groundbreaking 1979 article “Organizational Legends”, Martin & Wilkins (1979) identified three functions for organisational story: the generation of commitment, making sense of the organisation and control. Martin & Wilkins (1979) held that control within the organisation becomes easier as the stories of the organisation enhance the desired behaviour and attitudes of the members, and thus results in commitment.

In order to affect control, leaders should carefully contemplate their positions of power and suit their stories to desired outcomes (Meadors, 2001). Through stories leaders can structure attention and evoke patterns of meaning that give them considerable control over the situation they are trying to manage (Sievers, 1993). Boje (1991c) explained that being a player in the storytelling dialogue within an organisation requires political prowess “since seasoned players know which stories hold more currency and are more believable precedents than other stories” (Boje, 1991c:9). Greco (1996) added to this opinion by saying that “whoever dominates the discourse also manages meaning” (Greco, 1996:46). The importance however that “discourse is both medium and product of the power relations that characterize organizational behavior” (Deetz & Mumby, 1990:41) cannot be underestimated.

Storytelling can be an effective tool in the hands of leaders and managers to manage staff (Kahan, 2006), but managers can also use stories and storytelling to gain insight into themselves (Greco, 1996), develop management skills (Collison & MacKenzie, 1999) and to develop the ability to reflect and enable them to make better decisions as leaders (McKenna, 1999). Greco (1996) stated that “as teachers, mentors and leaders we use [stories] all the time because they work in some way. Yet we in the management development profession have not exploited [stories’] potential for helping managers to enhance their own learning in the workplace” (Greco, 1996:44).

Leaders, who understand themselves better, become better and more successful leaders (Blair, 2006). Harris & Barnes (2005) embroidered on the personal development of leaders and managers and explained that self-disclosure through storytelling is a powerful method of engaging and inspiring others. When a respected and admired leader, tells a story disclosing a failure, that story can have the paradoxical effect of building trust and encouraging openness and it can stimulate a dialogue about what the leader could have done differently and opens the way for others to share their stories. Buckler & Zien (1996) stated that not

only is it beneficial for leaders use their own personal stories but also, “the most effective leaders continually reshape [their] stories to offer fresh insights, uncover new challenges, and reinforce the notion that every employee can and should contribute their full potential” (Buckler & Zien, 1996:392).

Stories have positive effects in helping people to understand how challenges were overcome in the organisation and can also define roots, pivotal experiences, and defining moments (Futch, 2004)), stories can lend inspiration, motivation, guidance, reassurance and help provide a historical context to crisis and upheavals (InfoTech Advisor Newsletter, 2002). However, on the negative side stories can also be viewed as instruments of oppression and mystification full of agendas (Boje, 1995), a means to serve personal interests as opposed to organisational interests (Greco, 1996), be viewed as top management just spinning a tale to suit them (Collins & Rainwater, 2005) or as self aggrandizement (InfoTech Advisor Newsletter, 2002). Stories and storytelling also hold the power of becoming vehicles for marginalization, punishment and social control (Linstead, 1999). Gabriel (1991) warned that “[o]rganizational stories or myths should be considered with caution since their meanings can be manipulated” (Gabriel, 1991:857). An advanced perspective for any organisation will be to recognize that storytelling or narrative processes can nurture and create meaning or reinforce control and manipulate learning (Stewart, 2001:150).

“(T)he highly specialized nature of business today can lead to stilted conversations and one-way dialogue” (Development and Learning, 2003:24) and non-transactional storytelling approximating preaching or sermonizing, which does not allow for message exchange (Helmer, 1993). “Such storytelling does not seek feedback or recognize alternative interpretations of narratives. It is intended less to achieve understanding than to exert mastery and control” (Helmer, 1993:38). For leaders and managers to truly begin to understand what is going on in their organisations, attention should be paid to the stories permeating the organisation (Swap *et al*, 2001) because storytelling can have

both positive and negative impact on organisations and individuals and their commitment to the organisation (Greco, 1996). Silverman (2004) held that listening to others' stories is sometimes the most important thing a leader can do because seeking facts and data is not always the most successful way to find the underlying cause of issues in an organisation. "[B]y mining stories, listening to other organisation members' stories, a better understanding is achieved of the organizations health and people's attachment to it" (Silverman, 2004:48).

Managers and leaders have not traditionally involved themselves with seemingly irrelevant myths and gossip within organisations (Swap *et al*, 2001). Yet, stories are powerful conveyers of meaning and tacit knowledge and can have both positive and negative impact on organisations and individuals commitment to the organisation (Greco, 1996). Swap *et al* (2001:110) was of the opinion that "most stories told informally in organisations are negative" and therefore, managers cannot ignore these important transmitters. Paying attention to these stories "allow managers and staff to view politics and power systematically – to see what is really on the table" (Greco, 1996:53). Neile (2006) expressed the power and importance of storytelling to defuse harmful narratives. Through knowing, understanding and sharing stories the focus of leadership shifts form positional power, to relational power, of the two, relational power is the more powerful (Meadors, 2001). Also, by listening and re-telling stories, leaders and staff members note the difference between conventional perceptions of politics as negative tactics and politics as an exercise of power (Greco, 1996).

Boje (1991b) noted, after consulting Disney that Walt Disney himself did not tolerate the telling of negative stories within his organisation and successfully suppressed them and focused on telling positive organisational tales.

The researcher, having heard this tale numerous times in the past, found it ironic then that in 1957 Walt Disney instituted a ban on facial hair across the Disney Company – no mustaches, beards, goatees or side burns were allowed. Only the

mustachioed Walt Disney wore facial hair. This seemed to be an extremely authoritative and controlling in a negative sense for a man who was supposedly concerned about negative stories. Why indeed was Walt Disney allowed to wear facial hair and not his employees? Why did he allow a negative story about himself personally to permeate the company and the world? Further reading brought the researcher to the understanding that Walt Disney was not asserting his personal power in a negative way, but was in fact managing the Disney image. The ban on facial hair "was intended to help set Disneyland apart as a friendly, family-orientated amusement park, unlike many of the questionable fairgrounds and eerily groomed carnies of the day." (Workforce, 2000:1)

This tale brought to the researcher's attention that "organizational stories or myths should be considered with caution since their meanings can be manipulated or misconstrued" (Gabriel, 1991:857) which could be detrimental to the political power play within any organisation.

3.2 Storytelling as Research Methodology

"The monopoly of the traditional scientific approach to producing good organizational research has begun to erode during the past three decades" (Jermier & Domagalski, 2000:62). Organisational scholars tend to increasingly accept and understand that insights about people, organisations and the work people do in organisations can be produced and presented with or without positivist methods and analytical symbols (Jermier & Domagalski, 2000).

The domain of stories and storytelling and related genres has been awarded the ability to capture the emotional and subjective features of organisations (Jermier & Domagalski, 2000). Investigating organisations from this domain or using stories and storytelling to glean information about organisations have become progressively popular and have been employed by numerous organisational researchers such as McMillan (1990), Boje (1991a, 1991b, 1991c, 1995), Helmer (1993), Boyce (1995), Ramsey (1998), Vendelo (1998), Linstead (1999),

McKenna (1999), Gabriel (2000), Hannabuss (2000), Luwisch (2001), Gold & Holman (2001), Logan (2001), Ready (2002), Mead (2004), Johansson (2004), Kirsch (2004) and Hamilton (2006). Although these organisation researchers all engage in using story, narrative and storytelling to learn about organisations, different epistemological and methodological assumptions underlie their work. It does not however lie within the scope of this literature review to investigate these approaches in depth.

A key study found in the research pertaining to storytelling and stories as research methodology, was a critical review on stories and storytelling in organisations, written by Boyce (1995). Boyce (1995) explained that "the stories told in organizations offer researchers and organizational practitioners a natural entry point to understanding an organization" (Boyce, 1996:5). Boyce (1995) reviewed organisational story and storytelling through an interdisciplinary lens of social constructivism, interpretive organizational symbolism and critical theory. She investigated research done on story and storytelling within organisations, conducted within each paradigm. She concluded that "researchers from various disciplines have described organizational stories and the process of storytelling as primary ways in which meaning, both individual and collective, is expressed, and the paradigm (or perspective) within which one has worked shapes the design and method of a study and is evident in one's scholarship" (Boyce, 1996:9).

Mead (2004:1) used storytelling as a form of inquiry practice and illustrated "how storytelling can be used to help action researchers to gain fresh perspectives on their own experiences." Mead (2004) did not claim comprehensive explanation, but attempted to develop some understanding of why storytelling can be such a powerful means of accessing and expressing our lived experience. He concluded that storytelling did seem to offer "a powerful and profound form of presentational knowledge and… also seems to lead to the possibility of richer and more evocative accounts of inquiry practice" (Mead, 2004:13). Mead (2004) ascribed

this to the fact that stories can help to provide new insights, release tacit knowledge and ground the researcher's critical subjectivity more deeply in their lived experiences.

In the process of employing stories and storytelling in studying organisations "researchers are also creators of the reality they study, whether they intend to be so or not" (Johansson, 2004:287). Reason (1994) held that the researcher should be aware of his/her personal perspective and of its bias. "Critical subjectivity means that we do not suppress our primary subjective experience, that we accept that our knowing is from a perspective" (Reason, 1994:327).

Boyce (1996) also challenged the use of storytelling as research methodology due to the apparent ease with which researches limit themselves to a single paradigm and asserted, "few studies demonstrated the intellectual exercise of shifting paradigms or perspectives" (Boyce, 1996:8).

Linstead (1999) provided a comprehensive overview of areas of study, within organisation studies, which have emerged at the methodological level:

1. Organisations as fields of talk, and organizational reality as constructed through members' talk and conversation (Boden, 1994) or through storytelling (Boje, 1995)
2. More formal accounts of organization, where organizations attempt reflexively to construct their own histories and autobiographies through narrative (Czarniawska, 1996)
3. Viewing organizations as 'texts' to be interpreted or 'deconstructed' (Thachankary, 1992)
4. Ethnographic studies of organizations as places where several texts may collide and interpenetrate, an intertextuality and which many voices co-construct in plurivocity

5. Paying particular attention to specific genres or tropes in use in meaning construction, such as metaphor, rhetoric and irony (Hatch, 1998; Watson, 1996; Oswick and Grant, 1996)

3.3 Story Skills

A good story is "(s)omething that preserves plausibility and coherence, something that is reasonable and memorable, something that embodies past experiences and expectations, something that resonates with other people, something that can be reconstructed retrospectively but can also be used prospectively, something that captures both feeling and thought, something that allows for embellishment to fit current oddities, something that is fun to construct" (Weick, 1995:60).

This section focused on skills concerning the performance of a story, the gathering or harvesting of stories in the organisational context and story crafting for a specific business purpose.

Section 3.3.1 focused on story gathering or harvesting, which is the process whereby stories are sourced from various realms to be used in an organisation. Section 3.3.2 highlights the creation of stories to suit a specific business purpose, and the manner in which this can be accomplished (Denning, 2006a). Section 3.3.3 focused on the specific skills to be acquired by the storyteller to tell the story in a manner in which it can be successfully received by the listener (Mead, 2004; Blair, 2006 and McLellan, 2006).

The telling of a story – whatever the context – comprises three facets, the story, the storyteller and the listener

It lies beyond the scope of this research to identify the characteristics of well-made story as comprehensively discussed in Aristotle's Poetics. However, it is useful to note that the framework of a good story comprises the setting, the build

up, the crisis or climax, the subsequent learning and the new behaviour and awareness brought about by the story (Morgan & Dennehy, 1997:498).

Swap *et al* (2001:110) confirmed that the choice of story is of the utmost importance and suggested "that artificially constructed stories ultimately will be less effective than true ones." Durrance (1997) raised the credibility issue in telling stories and explained that "(y)ou don't have to be an expert to use stories to motivate people, but you must be credible… (t)he most inspiring story in the world that is not backed by the corporate, personal, or political reality creates cynicism and resentment" (Durrance, 1997:28). Weick (1995) and Frost (2002) on the other hand did not focus predominantly on the truth or credibility of the story, but that is should be a good story and that accuracy is not essential or necessary. The truthfulness or accuracy of the story becomes less significant than the fact that it is interesting or of interest to the listeners. (Frost, 2002)

Info-tech Advisor Newsletter (2002) advised when it is not a good time to tell stories:

1. When a report has been requested. If you are asked to do the budget in an Excel spreadsheet, don't give a rambling narrative to go along with it. Sometimes the story behind the numbers should be left to the facts and figures.
2. In the boardroom. It's unadvisable to try out a new story on the C-level crowd, even if it is relevant. You will need to test it against secondary audiences first. By the time your story is well-polished, it will be ready to give its intended effect.
3. Where analytical thinking would be better. Storytelling is not a silver bullet, nor is it intended to replace critical thought. Rather, the power of narrative lies in its ability to supplement and augment rational analysis by giving it focus and human touch.
4. When the story is categorically untrue. Don't make up stories outright. Don't twist a story until it no longer resembles its original form. Don't

displace a story from its original context. The whole point of storytelling is to strengthen your credibility as a wise and knowing leader, not to circumvent it.

3.3.1 Story Gathering or Harvesting

Although stories circulate freely and informally within organisations, it requires great effort to “capture, record and make appropriate stories available in a usable and credible form” (Linde, 2001:170).

The gathering and harvesting of stories can be done formally by directly asking people to tell their stories (Lieber & Davis, 1997) or informally through observing stories as they surface naturally (Kaufman, 2003). Kaufman (2003) suggests the best way to develop a repertoire of stories is to observe day-to-day activities and look for the stories. “Who are the risk takers in the organization? Who are the informal influence leaders? What are average employees doing that really makes a difference? Who are the organizations heroes, the people that go that extra mile?” (Kaufman, 2003:15)

Stories can be formally harvested, gathered or elicited from various sources such as communities (Snowden, 2000), from customers (to use in advertising and promotion) McLellan (2006), from customers (to get close to them) Lieber & Davis (1997), from organisation members and stakeholders (Kaufman, 2003 & Silverman, 2004), from executives, managers, sales people, and vendors (Boje, 1999c) and from workplace anthropologists gathering stories in their research documenting user behaviour (McLellan, 2006). It is possible “for organisations to go further in capturing the stories it wishes to have remembered by encouraging occasions on which valued narratives can be told” (Linde, 2001:166).
Apart from seeking out new stories from the current stakeholders of an organisation “(o)rganizational legends from the past can be fitted to current situations” (James & Minnis, 2004:31). Stories could also be harvested from a great variety of other sources such as history books, revising folk tales, poems,

movie scenes and songs, and fitting these tales to the situation at hand (James & Minnis, 2004).

Denning (2004) coined the phrase ‘springboard stories’ which have the capacity to spark off other stories and encourages participants in storytelling sessions to share their own stories. Blair (2006) also specifically intended sparking new stories aimed at a specific outcome.

> Be clear about what you want to explore through story. Are you interested in revitalizing the group’s commitment to the mission? Start with the mission statement. Are you interested in building coherence between team members? Then start with the team’s aspirations regarding its purpose and objectives. Do you want to stimulate new ways to bring value to the market? Then start with the customer. Phrase the opening question well so that it elicits the kind of story that will serve your final goal best. (Blair, 2006:12)

Below follows four accounts of successful story gathering processes found in the research.

1. Helmer (1993) spent almost a year gathering stories at The Harness Race Track. The primary data-gathering method was participant observation. Helmer (1993) employed Glaser & Strauss’s (1967) constant comparative method of qualitative analysis, which involves “the simultaneous collection, coding, and analysis of data as intertwined, iterative processes” (Helmer 1993:36).

1. McLellan (2006) related Coca-Cola’s exciting story gathering example. The World of Coca-Cola in Las Vegas is centered on stories and it is a combination of a theatre, museum and store. Customers are invited to tell

their Coca-Cola related stories and are recorded on film, these memories are screened in the storytelling theatre, which is visited by hundreds of thousands of people annually.

2. Silverman (2004) mined stories from approximately a hundred thousand members and their organisations through stakeholder dialogue sessions, at the American Society for Quality. Each story session began with a personal story from a board member, followed by the asking of questions inviting storytelling from participants.

3. During his story gathering phase at an office-supply company Boje (1991c) gathered stories from branch managers, corporate executives, sales people, vendors and customers. Boje (1991c) taped and transcribed every meeting, every hallway conversation, a restaurant lunch he participated in, and wrote filed notes of conversations when he did not have the opportunity to tape the conversations.

According to Linde (2001) the challenge lies not as much in the mining of stories, but in storing oral stories in static archives and categorizing them for story-banks or data-bases. The teller tailors the story to the listener or listeners, the situation, the relationships history and is therefore context sensitive and cannot easily be transferred to another situation or circumstance (Linde, 2001).

Aha (1997) critiqued that companies often spend vast amounts of resources on gathering stories during a comprehensive collection phase, but often do not follow it up with analysis or implementation.

3.3.2 Story Creating

Denning (2006a) proposed that in crafting the right story for the right situation is of the utmost importance, and stated that “the purpose of telling a story might determine its form” (Denning, 2004a:125). He also concluded that storytelling

encompasses an array of tools, each suitable to a different business purpose. (Denning, 2006a:42) Table 1 below offers a summary matching story type to story objective:

Table 1

Eight different narrative patterns			
If your objective is:	You will need a story that:	In telling it you will need to:	Your story will inspire phrases such as:
Sparking Action (Springboard Stories)	Describes how successful change was implemented in the past, but allows listeners to imagine how it might work in their situation	Avoid excessive detail that will take the audience's mind off its own challenge	"Just imagine…" "What if…?"
Communicating who you are	Provides an audience-engaging drama and reveals some strength or vulnerability from your past	Provide meaningful details but also make sure the audience has the time and inclination to hear your story	"I didn't know that about him!" "Now I see what he's driving at!"
Transmitting values	Feels familiar to the audience and will prompt discussion about the issues raised by the value being promoted	Use believable (though perhaps hypothetical) characters and situations, and never forget tha6t the story must be consistent with your own actions	"That's so right!" "Why don't we do that all the time?"
Communicating who the firm is – branding	Is usually told by the product or service itself, or by customer word-of-mouth or by a credible third party	Be sure the firm is actually delivering on the brand promise	"Wow!" "I'm going to tell my friends about this!"
Fostering Collaboration	Movingly recounts a situation that listeners have also experienced and that prompts them to share their own stories about the topic	Ensure that a set agenda doesn't squelch this swapping of stories – and that you have an action plan ready to tap the energy unleashed by this narrative chain reaction	"That reminds me of the time that I…" "Hey, I've got a story like that."
Taming the Grapevine	Highlights, often through the use of gentle humor, some aspect of rumor that reveals it to be untrue or unreasonable	Avoid the temptation to be mean-spirited – and be sure that the rumor is indeed false	"No kidding!" "I'd never thought about it like that before."
Sharing Knowledge	Focuses on mistakes made and shows, in some detail, how they were corrected, with an explanation of why the solution worked	Solicit alternative – and possibly better - solutions	"There but for the grace of God…" "Gosh! We'd better watch out for that in the future!"

Leading people into the future	Evokes the future you want to create without providing excessive detail that will only turn out to be wrong	Be sure of your storytelling skills (Otherwise, use a story in which the past can serve as a springboard to the future.)	"When do we start?" "Let's do it!"

(Denning 2006a:126)

Bell (1992) identified two ways of creating a story: crafting and re-crafting. Crafting implied 'baking' a story from scratch and re-crafting implied tailoring the story to fit the storyteller, audience or learning objective. Bell (1992) also provided three rules when creating a story:

- Clarify the story's purpose.
- Structure the story around context, challenge, climax
- Effectively deliver the story.

Kaye & Jacobson (1999) provided seven key strategies for creating stories:

1. Look for themes
2. Look for consequences
3. Look for lessons
4. Look for what worked
5. Look for vulnerability
6. Build for future experiences
7. Explore other resources

Dennehy (1999) provided five guidelines for creating a story:

1. Establishing the setting
2. Building the plot
3. Resolving the crisis
4. Describing the lessons learnt
5. Explaining how the characters change

A few warnings concerning story creation emerged from the reading. InfoTech Advisor Newsletter (2000) suggested the following: Do not make up stories outright; do not twist a story until it no longer resembles its original form. Do not displace a story from its original context. Do net tell boring stories.

Denning (2004) however, argued that boring stories also have their place and function and can be extremely "valuable to those close to the often esoteric subject matter" (Denning, 2004a:125). Boring stories are often a detailed explanation of cause-and-effect relationship between action and its consequence (Denning, 2004a).
Snowden (2002) warned that stories that are too positive could evoke 'anti-stories'. Denning (2004) on the other hand stated that people learn more from their mistakes than from their successes, that's why negative stories work and sometimes "a minimalist narrative is most effective because it lacks detail and texture, so that the audience does not get completely immersed in the story but think of their own stories and situations" (Denning, 2004a:124).

Berg (2005:15) - insurance and financial professional - suggested creating stories unique to a specific product is the best way to "help people visualize, relate the familiar to the unfamiliar and connect with emotions which are powerful drivers of client decisions".

Below is an example of a story created for a client about wealth transfer.

"The grandparents of one family I knew had a big apple tree in the middle of their backyard. They had 5 kids and 15 grandkids. So, you can imagine that it was a great place for the family to have fun.

In the summer, the kids played hide-and-seek around the tree and played on a huge tire swing in the middle of the tree. In autumn, the grandkids picked apples

for homemade apple pie. So, the tree was a great source of enjoyment for the family.

The grandparents wanted their children to someday have a huge apple tree to remind them of the fun at their house and also to make memories with their own grandchildren. So, one day they decided to pick one apple from the tree for each of their five children to plant in their backyards, to grow a big apple tree.

Wealth transfer is like taking those apples and giving them to the children to plant. IN wealth transfer, we take a portion of the investment portfolio – even a small amount of income from the portfolio – and gift that money to the children. And we often plant that money in life insurance to help provide a legacy to their heirs." (Berg, 2005:16)

3.3.3 Story Performance Skills

The story which follows below is an excellent example of how story performance skills can enhance the telling of a simple story (Simmons, 2001) and get the message across much more effectively (Morgan & Dennehy, 1997).

"I was talking to the class, when Dave Brown entered the class dressed in a bear suit. The bear was white with a large "I" on the chest and stood over 7 feet high. The bear took his seat and the class roared with laughter. I commented, "This is neat. What are you up to?" With this invitation the bear came to the front of the class and stood behind the podium. The bear pulled some crumpled notes from his pocket and waving them about began to tell his tale. He told a story about how he gotten an "innovative" idea. Then it dawned on me, the "I" on his chest stood for Innovation as well as for Icee. Icee drinks were not moving so well at Loyola Marymount University, so Dave told them he would wear a bear suit around campus and call himself Icee-bear for 12 dollars an hour. Sales went up. AS he told the story the bear asked for my pack of "participation slips". These are slips I hand to each student as they participate. He ran up and down the isles,

giving one to each person in the class. By this time, students were rolling in the isles. You see, the Icee-bear was imitating me by telling stories and handing out "participation slips". And I did not mind one bit. I, too, was laughing. For his finale, the bear handed out balloons. Everyone blew up a balloon. On each balloon was a picture of the Icee-bear. The people began to throw them in the air. You may be wondering what all this has to do with management education. All I can say is that the class had more positive spirit and enthusiasm than any class I was ever in. The topic that week was innovation, and the story, the performance, and the audience were well engaged in innovation. There was magic that day." (Boje 1991a:288)

The story above illuminates that the delivery of a story is as important as the content (Gabriel, 1991; Morgan & Dennehy, 1997; Simmons, 2001 and Denning, 2004). There is of course no single correct way of telling a story (Denning, 2004a), but in the quest of becoming a good storyteller, not only the crafting of the story, but also the non-verbal aspects of performance such as facial expression and accompanying gestures are critical (Denning, 2006a). "The way a story is performed can radically change its emotional tone in the mind of the listener (Denning, 2006a:47).

Various researchers and story practitioners such as Armstrong (1992), Bell (1992), Dennehy (1999), Simmons (2001) and Yoder-Wise & Kowalski (2003) provided guidelines for story performance. This section lends itself to the listing, in bullet point form, of brief guiding principles.

- Keep your story short(Armstrong, 1992)stick to the plot (Bell, 1992) and be specific (Yoder-Wise & Kowalski, 2003)
- Use names. Everyone craves recognition, and it means a lot more if the story is specific (Armstrong, 1992)
- Dramatize the story (Bell, 1992) in order to intrigue and captivate your audience (Yoder-Wise & Kowalski, 2003)

- Make the moral plain through the language you use. If it is not clear not everyone will interpret the story the way you intend (Armstrong, 1992)
- Use oral language effectively, for example, rather use a word like ‘roar’ as opposed to ‘laugh’ (Simmons, 2001) and use detailed descriptions (Bell, 1992)
- Establish the setting by describing the time, place, characters and context (Dennehy, 1999)
- Describe irrelevant detail to help convey mental images in order to transport the listener into the world of your story (Simmons, 2001)
- The tone of voice should be one of sharing not reporting (Simmons, 2001)
- Animate your facial expression (Simmons, 2001)
- Pay attention to body language (Simmons, 2001) and well chosen gestures (Bell, 1992)
- Use evocative language to heighten the senses (Simmons, 2001)
- Bring your listener into the dilemma (Yoder-Wise & Kowalski, 2003)
- Build the plot so that listeners can sense the tension of the situation (Dennehy, 1999)
- Do not ramble (Yoder-Wise & Kowalski, 2003), pace the story well (Simmons, 2001) and use pauses for dramatic effect (Bell, 1992)
- Avoid biting sarcasm and satire (Bell, 1992)
- Don’t elicit fear or guilt in the listener (Yoder-Wise & Kowalski, 2003)
- Connect at the level of humanity by staying true to your story (Yoder-Wise & Kowalski, 2003)

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

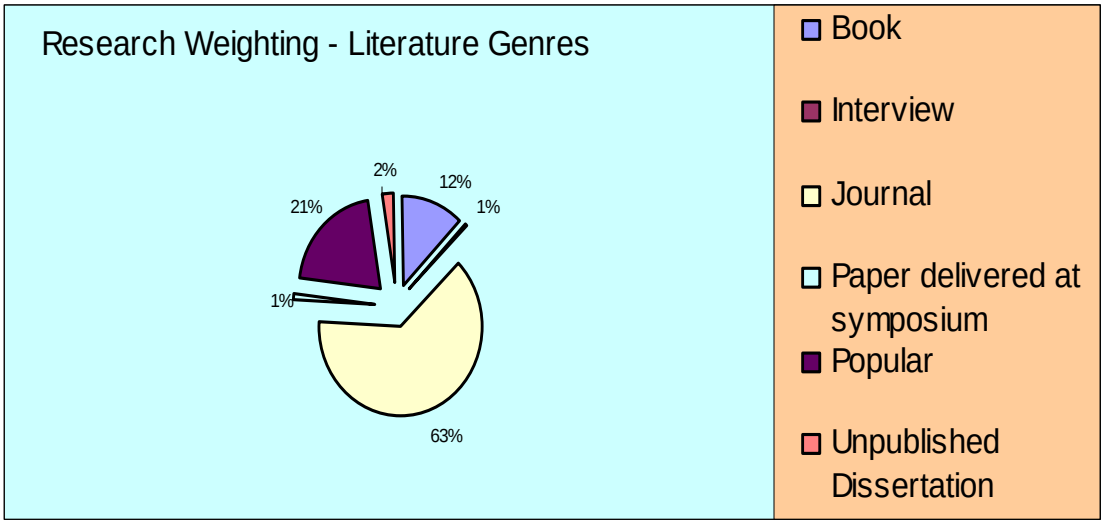
4.1 Summary

In Appendix A a summary of the areas of focus of each of the articles cited in this literature review is presented. The 129 publications presented in the table exclude any references in this report that were gleaned from texts not directly concerned with storytelling in organisations.

Further processing of the 129 publications offered in the table allowed for the following summary statements concerning this literature review:

The literature genres encompassed in this review were weighted as shown in Figure 1:

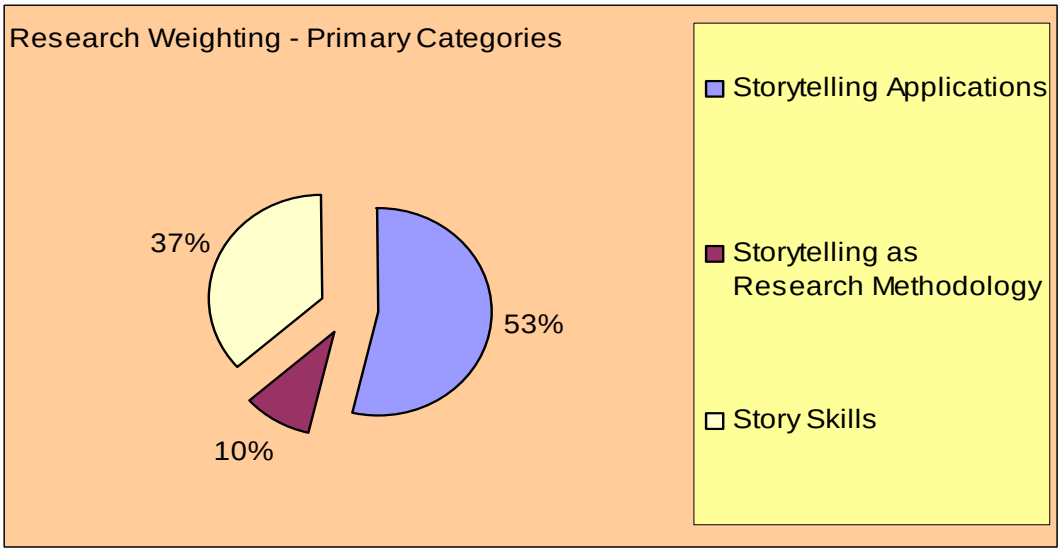
Figure 1: Weighting of Literature Genres in Review



Peer-reviewed journal articles accounted for 63% of the literature reviewed, with popular articles and books accounting for 21% and 12% respectively. Interviews, symposium papers and unpublished dissertations accounted for the remaining 4% of literature reviewed.

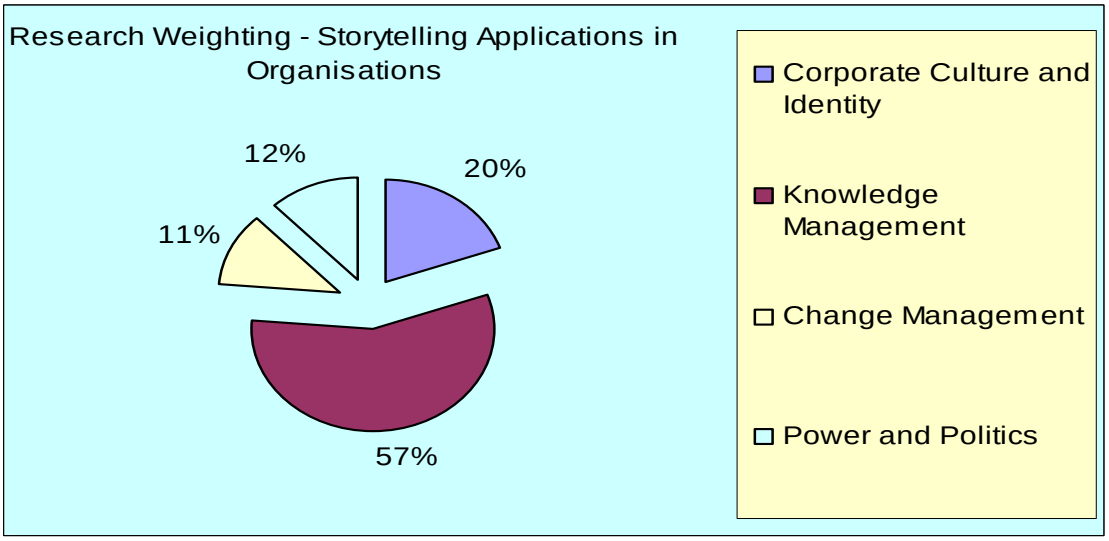
Figure 2: Research Weighting – Primary Categories shows the weight of literature dedicated to each of the primary categories distilled from the 129 publications directly concerned with storytelling in organisations.

Figure 2: Research Weighting – Primary Categories



While the 129 articles reviewed are not exhaustive, the weightings above suggest that within the body of literature concerning storytelling in organisations published between 1990 and 2006, the heaviest research or publication emphasis was placed on the primary category identified as “Storytelling Applications in Organisations” (53%), followed by “Story Skills” (37%) and “Storytelling as Research Methodology” (18%).

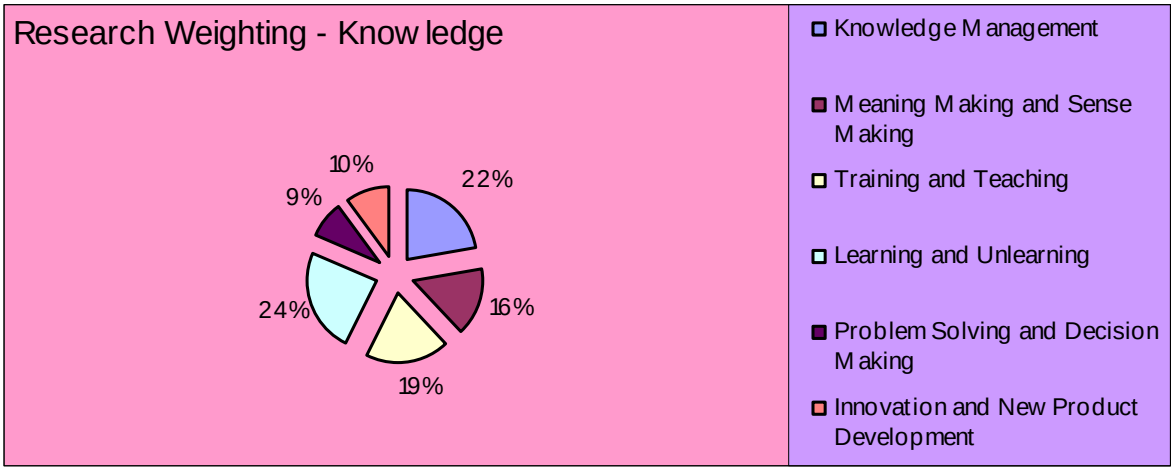
Figure 3: Research Weighting – Storytelling Applications in Organisations



Within the primary category “Storytelling Applications in Organisations” the weightings of categories were as follows: “Knowledge Management” at 57%, “Corporate Culture and identity” at 20%, “Power and Politics” at 12% and “Change Management” at 11%. Given the focus of the literature on “Knowledge management” and “Corporate Culture and Identity”, these two categories were further deconstructed.

The weighting of the sub-categories ascribed to “Knowledge Management” were as shown in Figure 4: Research Weighting – Knowledge Management. Note: While “Knowledge Management” stands as the title of this category, it is also a field of research in its own right and consequently is also counted along with the sub-categories derived from it.

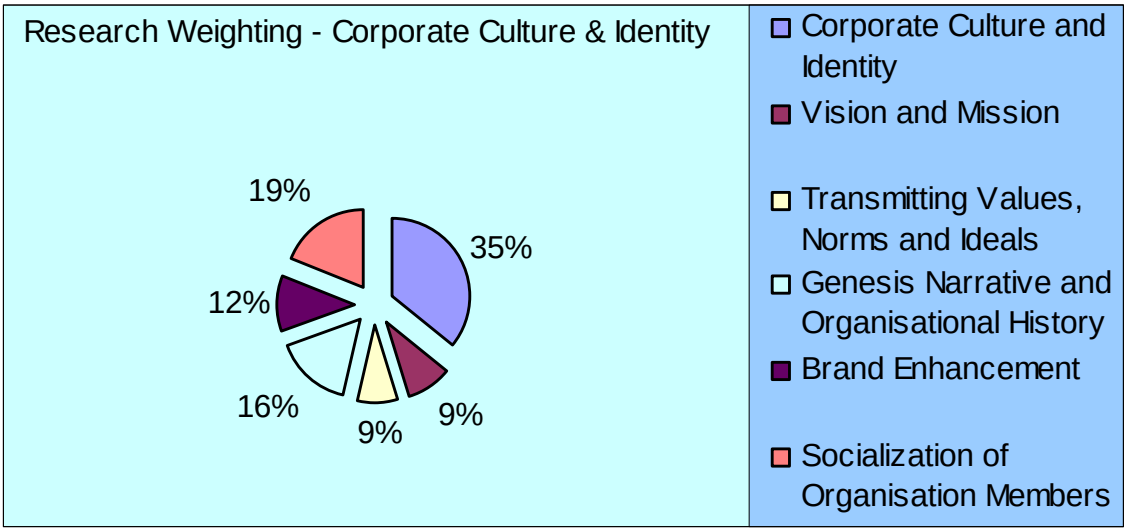
Figure 4: Research Weighting – Knowledge Management



While a count of literature reviewed with regards to the sub-categories ascribed to “Knowledge Management” suggested a fairly even spread across the various sub-categories, “Learning and Unlearning” with a weight of 24%, “Knowledge Management” with a weight of 22%, “Training and Teaching” with a weight of 19% and ‘Meaning Making and Sense Making’ with a weight of 16% accounted for 81% of the literature that could be sourced concerning the category “Knowledge Management”.

The last of the categories from which sub-categories were derived, was "Corporate Culture and Identity". The weighting of the sub-categories ascribed to "Corporate Culture and Identity" were as shown in Figure 5: Research Weighting – Corporate Culture and Identity. Note: While "Corporate Culture and Identity" stands as the title of this primary category, it is also a field of research in its own right and consequently is also counted along with the sub-categories derived from it.

Figure 5: Research Weighting – Corporate Culture and Identity

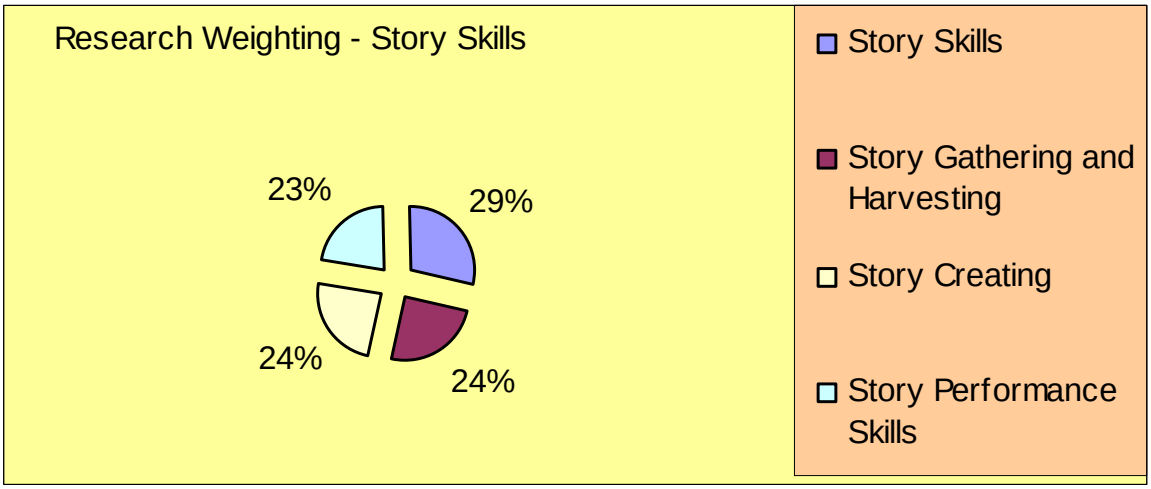


The search emphasis regarding the sub-categories derived from "Corporate Culture and Identity" evidenced a strong emphasis on literature concerned with the very notion "Corporate Culture and Identity"(35%), followed by "Socialization of Organisation Members"(19%),"Genesis Narrative and Organisational History"(16%)and "Brand Enhancement"(12%). Least prevalent was literature concerned with the use of storytelling with regards to sub-categories "Vision and Mission" (9%) and "Transmitting Values, Norms and Ideals" (9%).

The weighting of the sub-categories ascribed to the primary category "Story Skills" were as shown in Figure 6: Research Weighting – Story Skills. Note: While "Story Skills" stands as the title of this primary category, it is also a field of

research in its own right and consequently is also counted along with the sub-categories derived from it.

Figure 6: Research Weighting – Story Skills



In the case of the sub-categories “Story Skills”, the weighting of the literature was found to be very even, with a slight bias towards “Story Skills” (29%) *per se*.

No sub-categories could be derived from the categories “Change Management”, “Power and Politics” and the primary category “Storytelling as Research Methodology”.

Because the literature reviewed for this review does not claim to be exhaustive, the summaries of the literature weightings offered above must not be taken as definitive. However, it is this researcher’s opinion that the 129 articles that form the basis of the weightings reflected give a useful indication of which areas in the field of research concerned with storytelling in organisations received greater or lesser attention from researchers, writers and publishers during the period that is the focus of this review.

Most emphasized was “Knowledge Management”, with 57% of the literature reviewed dedicated to research on “Storytelling Applications in Organisations” which in itself comprised 53% of the entire body of literature surveyed. Within

the field of “Knowledge Management”, the use of storytelling to manage the learning and unlearning of organisational members received most research and publication emphasis.

Least emphasized was the primary category “Storytelling as Research Methodology” with only 10 of the literature reviewed dedicated to this discipline.

4.2 Limitations and Delimitations

The study was limited to literature published in English between 1990 and 2006.

The study was not exhaustive within this time-period.

Also excluded were articles that were concerned with storytelling in organisations, but which, by the year 2006, were singular in their area of research, falling into none of the established peer-reviewed categories identified during the course of this review. It may well be possible that these lone articles will prove to be the genesis of new areas of research in this particular discipline. One such example is Gershon & Page (2001): What Storytelling Can Do for Information Visualization. No other articles pertaining to this field of study were found.

4.3 Suggestions for Further Research

It was noted during the course of this literature review that most of the literature, regardless of the category in which it fell, was focused on the use of storytelling as a management tool, and in particular to reinforce and sustain organisational cultures, i.e. the top-down use of storytelling. Fewer publications evidenced an analysis of the *actual* stories present in organisations, i.e. a bottom-up analysis and use of storytelling in organisations. Research in the latter approach may well prove to be fruitful.

In the ten case studies mentioned in this review, the methodology of each of the practitioners/researchers was unique to themselves. This researcher could find no literature that offered an analysis of the application and efficacy of a given storytelling methodology in multiple, and different, organisational circumstances.

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APPENDIX A

MATRIX OF REVIEWED LITERATURE: KEY

A	**Corporate Culture and Identity**
B	Corporate Culture and Identity
C	Vision and Mission
D	Transmitting Values, Norms and Ideals
E	Genesis Narrative and Organisational History
F	Brand Enhancement
G	Socialization of Organisation Members
H	**Knowledge Management**
I	Knowledge Management
J	Meaning Making and Sense Making
K	Training and Teaching
L	Learning and Unlearning
M	Problem Solving and Decision Making
N	Innovation and New Product Development
O	**Change Management**
P	**Power and Politics**
Q	**Storytelling as Research Methodology**
R	**Story Skills**
S	Story Skills
T	Story Gathering and Harvesting
U	Story Creating
V	Story Performance Skills

The matrix excludes any references in this report that were gleaned from texts not directly concerned with storytelling in organisations.

The process of identifying categories and sub-categories of discussion within the relevant sources, was done solely though the researchers personal perspective and judgment.

		C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
Abma (2003)	Journal									1	1	1				1				
Aha (1997)	Unpub Dis																1	1		
Adamson et al (2006)	Journal													1						
Akin (2000)	Journal							1	1		1									
Allen (2005)	Popular					1		1					1							
Armstrong (1992)	Book										1									1
Asia Africa (2004)	Popular									1										
Austin (1995)	Popular									1										
Barton-Leonard (1992)	Journal							1			1	1								
Basile (2000)	Journal					1														
Bell (1992)	Journal									1	1								1	1
Bennet(2003)	Popular																1		1	1
Berg (2005)	Popular																1	1	1	
Blair (2006)	Journal	1						1										1		
Boje (1991a)	Journal									1	1					1			1	1
Boje (1991b)	Journal				1				1			1		1	1	1				
Boje (1991c)	Journal									1	1			1	1	1	1	1		
Boje (1995)	Journal								1			1			1	1				
Boyce (1995)	Journal	1	1					1	1					1		1				
Boyce (1996)	Journal								1							1				
Brittain, Swain & Simpson (2005)	Journal													1	1					
Brown (1990)	Journal	1											1							
Brown et al (2004)	Book							1					1	1						
Buckler & Zien (1996)	Journal												1	1						
Collins & Rainwater (2005)	Journal													1	1					
Collison & Mackenzie (1999)	Journal	1						1							1					
Cook (1999)	Journal	1						1		1	1									
Czarniawska (1998)	Book								1											
De Cagna (2001)	Interview													1						
Deetz & Mumby (1990)	Journal														1					
Development and Learning (2003)	Journal	1									1			1	1					
Dennehy (1999)	Popular																	1		1
Denning (2000)	Book							1	1	1	1	1	1	1			1	1	1	1
Denning (2004a)	Popular							1						1			1	1	1	1

Denning (2006a)	Journal				1											1	1	1	1
Denning (2006b)	Popular												1						
Durrance (1997)	Journal	1					1			1	1					1			1
Eisenberg & Goodall (1997)	Book								1										
EuropeMedia (2003)	Popular				1	1		1											
Feldman (1990)	Journal													1					
Fineman & Gabriel (1996)	Journal									1									
Fog, Budtz & Yakaboylo (2005)	Book				1	1													
Fox et al (2001)	Journal												1	1					
Frost (2002)	Popular															1			
Fuller (2006)	Popular									1									
Futch (2004)	Popular													1					
Gabriel (1991)	Journal	1					1												1
Gabriel (2000)	Book	1							1					1	1	1	1	1	1
Garguilo (2006)	Journal							1			1							1	
Gold & Holman (2001)	Journal								1	1	1				1				
Greco (1996)	Journal	1							1	1	1			1					
Griffin (2001)	Popular	1			1														
Groh (2006)	Popular			1			1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
Hale (2005)	Popular			1															
Hannabuss (2000)	Journal							1	1										
Hansen (2006)	Journal													1					
Harris & Barnes (2005)	Popular													1					
Hatch (1998)	Journal														1	1			
Helmer (1993)	Journal						1							1	1		1		
Holt (2004)	Book				1														
Info-Tech (2002)	Popular													1		1		1	1
James & Minnis (2004)	Journal	1						1	1	1		1		1	1		1	1	1	
Jensen (1999)	Book							1			1		1	1					
Jermier & Domagalski (2000)	Journal								1										
Johansson (2004a)	Journal														1				
Julie, Gerard & Heinzen (2000)	Book									1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1
Kahan (2001)	Popular							1						1						1
Kahan (2006)	Journal										1			1			1			
Kaufman (2003)	Journal	1	1			1	1							1				1		
Kaye & Jacobson (1999)	Journal								1										1	
Kelly (2005)	Popular												1							
Kirsch (2004)	Journal								1	1	1			1		1				
Kolb (2003)	Journal	1												1						
Kreps (1990)	Journal	1																		
Lämsä & Sintonen (2006)	Journal							1			1									
Larson (1991)	Unpub Dis										1									
Linde (2001)	Journal	1					1	1			1					1		1		
Linstead (2001)	Journal																			
Logan (2001)	Journal							1								1				
Luwisch (2001)	Journal						1			1						1				
Lieber & Davis (1997)	Popular																			
Martin et al(2006)	Journal	1																		

McCollum (1991)	Journal	1	1											1					
McKenna (1999)	Journal						1					1		1	1	1			
McLellan (2006)	Journal	1			1			1		1			1				1	1	1	1
McWhinney (1995)	Unpub Dis												1							
Mead (2004)	Journal								1							1				
Meadors (2001)	Popular														1					
Morgan & Dennehy (1997)	Journal									1	1				1		1	1	1	1
Neile (2006)	Popular														1					
Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995)	Book							1			1									
Orr (1996)	Book										1									
Pine & Gilmore (1999)	Book					1														
Poulton (2005)	Journal	1	1	1	1				1		1									
Putnam et al (1991)	Journal				1															
Prusak(2006)	Popular												1				1		1	1
Ramsey (1998)	Journal													1	1	1				
Randall & Martin (2003)	Journal	1		1			1				1							1	1	
Ready (2002)	Journal		1							1					1	1			1	
Reason (1994)	Journal															1				
Rhodes & Brown (2005)	Journal						1	1							1					
Schank (1990)	Book								1											
Schein (2006)	Journal	1																		
Shaw, Brown & Bromiley (1998)	Popular									1					1				1	
Sheridan (1996)	Popular	1												1						
Sievers (1994)	Symp Paper						1										1	1		
Silverman(2004)	Journal		1	1		1	1							1				1		
Simmons (2001)	Book													1	1		1			1
Simmons (2005)	Popular																1		1	
Sinclair (2005)	Journal							1	1						1					
Smircich & Morgan (1991)	Journal								1											
Snowden(1999)	Journal	1															1			
Snowden (2000)	Journal																	1		
Snowden (2002)	Journal							1				1	1	1		1				
Sole & Wilson (2005)	Journal							1												
Solovy (1999)	Popular									1										
Stewart (2001)	Journal							1			1									
Swap et al (2001)	Journal							1		1	1						1			
Szulanski (1996)	Journal							1		1	1									
Tappan (1991)	Journal			1			1													
Thomas & Allen	Journal							1						1						
Vance (1991)	Journal				1					1	1									
Vendelo (1998)	Journal	1				1										1				
Walsh & Ungson (1991)	Journal				1															
Weber & Glynn(2006)	Journal							1				1								
Weick & Quinn (1999)	Journal											1								
Weick (1995)	Book																1			1
Yoder-Wise & Kowalski (2003)	Journal										1						1	1	1	1
Zemke (1990)	Journal									1	1									