

Chennai Storytelling Festival 2018 at Loyola (Feb 08 to 11, 2018)

WEPRO, Loyola College and World storytelling Institute jointly conducted a Four-day International Workshop titled “**Chennai Storytelling Festival 2018**” from Feb 08 to Feb 11, 2018. The main theme of the festival is "Storytelling for Teaching, Training, and Healing: Helping to Activate the Listener".

Storytelling festival aimed at developing the self-confidence and soft skills of the college students, corporates, parents and teachers. It objectified the idea how every one of us is a storyteller and how our story could be shared with the world for a successful, extraordinary and peaceful life. This festival brought out the story in us and helped us tell the world.

Hands on experience was the mode of the workshops. Learning by doing would be the training strategy followed by the resource persons. Each workshop accommodated a maximum of 20 participants. Thus the organizers wanted to ensure the effectiveness of the workshops. Sometimes, all adult participants are in one group, with much of the work being done by participants individually (writing or drawing) or in pairs and in groups of 5. Even the symposium was meant to be interactive, sharing by the speakers and Q&A by staff and students.

The list of resource persons included Dr Martha Bigelow, Professor, University of Minnesota, USA, Ms Cathryn Fairlee, Professional Storyteller, California, USA, Dr Eric Miller, Director, World Storytelling Institute, Chennai. The workshop was a conglomeration of ELT scholars sharing their expertise on the importance of applying the age-old technique of storytelling to solve modern day problems, learn language skills, enhance one's personality, use it for counseling, explore and express one's identity and mission in life and many other aspects of one's life and career.

The inaugural of the festival was marked with the esteemed presence of college officials and foreign delegates. The inaugural session of the symposium was held from 9.30 am to 1.00 pm. This storytelling festival was envisioned and effectively organized under the guidance of Dr D. Louis Joseph Chandra, Head, Department of English and Dr K.S. Antonysamy, Associate Professor of English and Director, WEPRO, Loyola College. The function was adorned with the presence of **Rev. Dr Arockiasamy Xavier, SJ, the Principal, Loyola College** and **Prof. S. Pencier, Vice-principal, Loyola College**. Dr Louis Joseph Chandra delivered the welcome address and greeted the officials and organizers of the program with a shawl and bouquet. Fr.

Principal felicitated the gathering and shared his views and ideas about the age old practice of storytelling. He concluded stating that as much as stories are not shared, culture of any particular tribes can never be preserved. **Dr K.S. Antonysamy** presented the symposium dynamics, shared the significance of storytelling and how its relevance was important in today's context.

The resource persons from the United States of America enlightened the teacher participants as well as students who attended in large numbers. **Dr Eric Miller, Director of the World Storytelling Institute, Chennai** has Ph.D. in the discipline of folklore from the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, USA. He conducts storytelling workshops for educators, therapists, people in the business world and young people. **Dr Martha Bigelow, professor of Applied Linguistics from the University of Minnesota, USA** spoke on "Understanding Narratives using Socio Linguistics tools". **Ms Cathryn Fairlee, a professional storyteller from California, USA** delighted the audience with her performance of a Mayan Folktale. The main objective of this conference is to demonstrate to teachers of the English language and students for whom English is the second language that story telling is part of a person's national identity, as it touches the core of the universal human experience. As there is something more to an ocean than fish, the resource persons through their lecture and performances showed that there is more to storytelling than stories. The conference reinforced the innovative idea of using stories and narratives handed over for centuries by preceding generations can be a valuable and cognitively engaging pedagogical tool to facilitate the acquisition of English as a second language.

More than 200 student participants both from Loyola and other colleges attended the workshops and found them interesting and enriching. About 100 adults from various walks of life benefitted from the workshops and storytelling performances by resource persons from all over the world. Ms Priyanka Chatterjee, Kolkatta, Ms Shreya Biswas, Bangalore, Ms Mohanty, Mumbai, Vasugi Ram Manohar, Chennai, Ms Yogita Ahuja, Ahamedabad and award winning performers from USA and Sweden had come as resource persons and shared their expertise.