



Newsletter #2 2015

A Competence Profile for a Storytelling Curator



*Marianne Folkedotter,
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Västerbottens museum, Sweden.
Photo Emelie Sigfridsson.*

In the project **Story Regions** we want to explore the potential of oral storytelling as a tool for learning for different target groups in adult education and in social and cultural contexts. In this project we introduce storytelling approaches and techniques as a binding factor to unite the different learning and socio-cultural sectors in a community in a common approach to cooperation for learning, for community development and for inclusion.

Regional branding

One of the key elements in this approach is the role of a Storytelling Curator. In this respect the region of Västerbotten in Sweden, one of the project partners, did some pioneer work. Västerbotten region decided to brand itself as a 'storytelling region'. In order to get there the regional authorities appointed a Storytelling Curator: a person whose job it is to promote all kinds of storytelling activities and events in the region and who is able to generate cooperation and synergy through storytelling.

This turned out to be very effective. Thanks to the work of the curator the concept of Västerbotten – Storytelling County is well known in Sweden. The project has created several new venues for storytelling in Västerbotten and storytelling is used to disclose Västerbotten's heritage. The county's cultural and tourism potential is richer, thank to storytelling and the project has built new forms of cooperation between cultural institutions, such as theatres, museums, libraries, archives, educational organisations, schools and tourism in Västerbotten.

Therefore the partners in **Story Regions** decided to further develop a competence profile for a storytelling curator: what competences does such a person need to do the job effectively?

The job of a storytelling curator

A first step to get to this profile was a possible 'job description' or task list. Key tasks in the job of Storytelling Curator can be:

- to establish, develop and coordinate a network for storytelling
- to organise networking activities, e.g. through seminars, gatherings etc between existing and new actors with different starting points that are interested in storytelling
- to investigate the prospects for a regional support centre for storytelling
- to organize the work in a regional support centre for storytelling
- to ensure that storytelling training programs are organized for specific professions such as teachers, tour leaders, guides and library, archive or museum staff
- to encourage storytelling projects where the library, museum and archive sector, local history societies, study groups, schools, teacher groups are involved
- to initiate special events such as storytelling cafes, storytelling festivals and workshops, which can ultimately include both national and international elements
- to promote and support initiatives for starting training programs, courses and workshops on storytelling at universities, colleges and schools
- to bring in national and international intelligence about storytelling (through seminars, festivals etc.)

Competences

With such a task list what would be the competences needed for a person to accomplish this?

The project team, together with storytelling expertise, has singled out some core competences: networking, knowledge about the potential of applied storytelling and storytelling as a performing art, good knowledge of the regional society structure: its social, cultural and educational institutions. Creativity and imagination are also important competences in this context. A storytelling curator doesn't need to be a storyteller but he/she should know the 'storytelling scene' very well, should know a number of (local) storytellers and their qualities, should be able to link the needs of the socio-cultural sector to the opportunities of storytelling.

A number of competences needed are not specific – more generic – but equally important: the competence to organise & facilitate events such as trainings or special evenings, communication and social competences, negotiation skills: "A storytelling curator must be a good listener..." What about 'cultural awareness' as a competence, in the sense of knowing the culture of a group or society? Or what about 'multicultural awareness' in present times where storytelling can play a role in a society with many immigrants, newcomers, refugees ...

Staffing

Not many local or regional authorities would go as far as Västerbotten region and appoint a dedicated person to do the job of storytelling curator, but practically all cities or regions will have staff e.g. library personnel, culture officers or social integration services staff etc working in fields with objectives that fit into the approach of **Story Regions**. Therefore the above tasks and competences list can be useful for organisations willing to realise some of their objectives through storytelling and to dedicate a part time job (if not full time) to certain tasks and also to help them identify the profile of the person to fill this position.

Story Regions is developing a methodology, collecting good practices and piloting local projects in order to create support material and run training for future storytelling curators to develop their competences.

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Project partners:

Region Västerbotten, coordinator (Sweden)

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Q21, Agency for Qualification and Transfer Management (Germany)

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