

# Storytelling with Roamer<sup>®</sup>

**Alison Royce**, *alison.royce@btinternet.com*

Freelance storyteller.

**Dave Catlin**, *dave@valiant-technology.com*

Valiant Technology Ltd, Grange Mills, Weir Road, Balham, London SW12 0NE, England

## Exploring Storytelling Methods Useful with Robots

This workshop presents our work on combining the power of storytelling with educational robotics. It will be led by Alison Royce - a drama teacher, actress and now a freelance storyteller. She is supported by robot designer Dave Catlin CEO of Valiant Technology. It will use Valiant's Roamer robot. It is suitable for those with a general interest in constructionism and educational robots. People are particularly invited who are interested in a use of robots as relational objects.

Classic Roamer has been in schools since 1989. It is a combination of Turtle and Big Trak. The latest version, Roamer-Too, is a talking robot which interacts with students via any semiotic system, whether traditional Logo or speech or the wave of a hand. Students can transform Roamer into different characters using engineering techniques or arts and crafts. However, Roamer is also ready for action "straight out of the box". Primarily the student's focus is not on building robots, but using them to engage difficult ideas.

Storytelling is one of the oldest educational tools used by every culture in the world. Embedded in stories is the wisdom of generations. When we engage stories we explore ancestral patterns of thinking and reconstruct their knowledge, taking from them meanings relevant to our time and space. A storyteller with a glove puppet can draw students out of themselves and put them into the story so they can explore the world from a new perspective. Storytelling props can be anything; a piece of wood or a tin of beans become things that prod our imagination. We construct stories from the "things to hand": Sherry Turkle calls these "relational objects". When the robot is a part of this bricolage there is a shift from cognitive to affective thinking. The opportunity exists for students to apply their innate cultural knowledge to problem solving.

## Method

Our efforts to fuse together the various elements of traditional storytelling with Roamer technology is at an early stage. We wish to enrich our general understanding by engaging with the considerable experience available at the conference. The workshop will offer people the opportunity to engage with some of the techniques we have so far developed and use that experience to suggest ways of developing this whole approach.

## Expected outcomes

We hope participants will leave with a general understanding of the approach and inspired to develop new to stories embracing different themes.

## Keywords

Educational Robots, Roamer, STEM, Storytelling, Constructionism.