

IO1 Building Basic Skills Toolkit

Session Plans for Storytelling Resources

Introduction

The aim of the Artistic Licence Basic Skills Toolkit is to build basic skills and competences in marginalised adult and migrant learners through various creative media, including drama, music and storytelling. These session plans present different activities and methods for using storytelling techniques and the process of storytelling to explore alternative education strategies for marginalised adult and migrant learners.

Storytelling is an appropriate medium to use to engage language learners and adults with low levels of literacy and oracy. As such, it is effective at lowering the threshold to education and at creating innovative pathways for disadvantaged learners to engage in meaningful learning experiences. Activities can then be further developed to support learners of all levels to improve their communication and presentation skills; as well as, in some cases, developing their cultural awareness, tolerance, self-confidence and self-awareness.

Title	'There's a street in Rome...'	
Target Group	Adult, migrant and language learners	
Duration	10-20 minutes, depending on the group size	
Learning Outcome	Promotes visual memory and develops the listening skills of learners	
Level(s)	Remembering	
Purpose	Resources/ Materials Needed	
The aim of this activity is to develop learners listening skills and visual memory, but introducing a scenario to them, asking them to contribute to the scene and then encouraging them to repeat the contributions of other learners. The room is accessible for learners of all levels and abilities, and it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A room with chairs arranged in a semi-circle. 	

can be repeated with different scenarios to repeatedly work on developing learners' visual memory.

Instructions for facilitator

This activity is called the “There is a street in Rome...”. The aim of this activity is to require all learners to remember all of the items that are listed by other learners in the group. The learner has to list out all of the items that were mentioned by their peers and then add their own object or item to the list. To deliver this activity:

- The facilitator begins by explaining to the learners that as a group, they are aiming to describe a photograph of a street in Rome to their friends.
- Each learner is then told that they will have to start their sentence with: ‘there is a street in Rome, and on that street there is a...’.
- When the scene passes to the next learners, they have to start by saying ‘there is a street in Rome, and on that street there is a...’ and list out all of the items – cars, shops, trees, buildings, signs, people – which were mentioned by previous learner(s), before adding their own element to the picture.
- For example:
 - ‘There is a street in Rome, and on that street there is...’
 - Learner 1: a row of houses on the right side of the pavement.
 - Learner 2: a row of houses on the right side of the pavement and a big tree outside the second house.
 - Learner 3: a row of houses on the right side of the pavement, a big tree outside the second house and a red car parked on the left side of the pavement.
 - Learner 4: a row of houses on the right side of the pavement, a big tree outside the second house, a red car parked on the left side of the pavement and a white cat sitting on the bonnet of the car.
- Depending on the group size, the facilitator can choose to continue the activity so that they can go around the group 2 or 3 times, leading to there being up to 20 elements to the picture.
- If the facilitator decides to repeat the activity with different rounds, and building more complicated pictures, they can choose if they want the learners to remember just all the elements in the picture or if they would prefer if all elements were repeated in the order that they were first listed.

Variations to the Activity

1. As a variation to this activity, the facilitator can choose to introduce a different scenario, based on the composition of the group and the aim of the session.

- For example, as an exercise with jobseekers, the facilitator might choose to introduce the scenario of “I am going to a job interview, and I need to prepare...”;
- Alternatively, if the facilitator is trying to develop the everyday vocabulary of language learners, they might decide to set the scenario as, “I walk into my local market/shop and I see...”.

Title	Using storytelling for language learning	
Target Group	Adult, migrant and language learners	
Duration	20-30 minutes	
Learning Outcome	Building sentences and stories from simple words	
Level(s)	Remembering and Creating	
Purpose	Resources/ Materials Needed	
This short storytelling activity can help learners of a second-language to create sentences from simple words and to build stories with the support of all group members. This activity works well with migrant language learners, as it helps them to learn new words in a fun and engaging way, with the support of their peers. The activity typically works best as an ice-breaker activity with a group of migrant language learners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A room with chairs arranged in a circle so that learners and the facilitator can hear and see each other. • Whiteboard/Flipchart for facilitator with markers. • Pens and note-taking materials for learners. 	
Instructions for facilitator		
<p>The name of this activity is “Building Simple Sentences”. To deliver this activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The facilitator can ask all learners to stand or sit in a circle. • Each learner is then asked to say a letter of the alphabet, going in alphabetical order, starting with the facilitator. • For the second round, the learners are asked to replace their letter with a word that begins with that first letter – so for example, ‘a’ becomes ‘apple’; ‘b’ becomes ‘bat, etc. Where a learner says a word to the group that others do not understand, the facilitator is encouraged to explain this word to the 		

learners and to ask for and give examples of how the word can be used in a sentence.

- For the third round of this activity, each learner is encouraged to build a sentence around the word they have chosen in round two – so for example, ‘apple’ becomes ‘I bought an apple in the shop’; ‘bat’ becomes ‘I saw a bat in the cave’, etc.
- For the fourth and final round of this activity, learners are encouraged to work together as a group to build a story. For this round, the facilitator begins with one sentence, and each learner is asked to add a sentence to the story. The only rule is that their sentence must include the word they shared in round two; and that their sentence is connected to the previous learners sentence by using transitions such as “and”, “but”, “so”, “then”, etc.
- As a final group activity, the facilitator can write the full story on a flipchart or whiteboard and ask learners to copy the story into their notes, so that they can revise how to construct sentences using simple words outside of the session.

Variations to the Activity

1. As a variation to this activity, the learners can use the word from round two to share a line of a song with the group with the word in it. The group can then have some fun putting the different lines of the songs together and singing the full song – made up from lines of different songs – together at the end of the activity. As learners have to remember the lines from all of the different songs to sing it together, this can also improve their memory and listening skills.

Title	Using objects as a source of inspiration for storytelling	
Target Group	Adult, migrant and language learners	
Duration	30-40 minutes	
Learning Outcome	Stimulation of emotional memory; Building confidence in public speaking and using the imagination.	
Level(s)	Evaluating and Creating	
Purpose	Resources/ Materials Needed	
The aim of this activity is to encourage adult, migrant and language learners to improve their oral and aural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A room with chairs arranged in a semi-circle. 	

communication skills; and also to develop their sense of self-awareness and self-confidence by using an object as a source of inspiration for a story. The activity can also stimulate the learners' emotional memory and imagination, through the medium of storytelling.

- Different small objects, with different sizes, textures, etc.
- A bag or basket to place all objects in the centre of the semi-circle.

Instructions for facilitator

This activity is called the "Object Exercise". To deliver this activity:

- The facilitator asks all learners to sit with their chairs in a semi-circle, facing the facilitator.
- One by one, the facilitator asks the learners to volunteer to take their seat and to sit and face the other group members.
- The volunteer then puts their hand behind their back and the facilitator takes an object from the bag in the centre of the group, and without showing the volunteer or the other learners, the facilitator places the object in the volunteer's hands.
- Based on touch alone, the volunteer is asked to tell a story of a memory that the object evokes and the other learners must listen to the story and try to guess what the object is.
- The activity is then repeated until all learners have had the opportunity to participate.

Variations to the Activity

1. As a variation to this activity, if the group are meeting together over several sessions, the facilitator can ask learners to bring small objects that are significant to them to their next session, and to prepare a story about their chosen object, detailing what memories it brings back for them and why it is significant to them.
2. As another variation to this activity, the facilitator can propose that the volunteer is blindfolded and the objects can be replaced by foods or objects with a distinct smell. This activity may work best with native speakers to develop their language skills, stimulate emotional memory and improve their oral presentation skills.

Title	Sharing personal stories for greater intercultural awareness	
Target Group	Adult and migrant learners	
Duration	20-30 minutes	
Learning Outcome	Working on direct and indirect speech	
Level(s)	Applying and Analysing	
Purpose	Resources/ Materials Needed	
This activity can be useful to further improve the language skills of participants. This activity requires learners to share a short story about themselves; and it is an effective activity for developing the learners' direct and indirect language skills in a language that is not their mother tongue. This activity can improve learners' self-awareness, self-confidence and communication skills, including their non-verbal and listening skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A room with chairs arranged in a semi-circle. 	
Instructions for facilitator		
<p>This activity is called: "The First Time". To deliver this activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners should begin by sitting with their chairs in a circle so that they are open and receptive to the stories being shared. • The facilitator starts by telling a story about the first time they did something. This could be anything from going to the beach for the first time, to driving their car alone for the first time. • The facilitator then divides the group of learners into pairs and invites each pair to take turns telling each other a story of the first time they did something. This could be something they did at first in their host country, or an earlier memory from their childhood. • After 10-15 minutes, the facilitator then brings the whole group back together and invites volunteers to come forward and share the stories of their first time doing something. If the group are more familiar with each other, they can decide if they will tell their own story or the story of their partner. 		

- The facilitator can then lead a short verbal feedback session with the group to assess how they felt in the role of storyteller, listener and presenter.

Follow-up Activity

As a follow-up activity, the facilitator can introduce the “Reduce the Story” activity. The aim of this activity is to support language learners to identify the essential and additional parts of stories; by encouraging them to unravel the story, to find out what the story is really about and to get to the real heart of the story by reducing the content of the story to the core message.

To deliver this activity:

- The facilitator starts by repeating the story they shared about “The First Time” they did something. The story should be longer this time, ensuring that it is at least 10-15 sentences in length and this can be pre-prepared. By using the story of the facilitator, it annuls any negative impact which ‘reducing the story’ may have on the learners who have shared a personal memory or story from their past.
- When the facilitator is finished their story, he/she then asks learners to work together in smaller groups of 2 or 3, depending on group size, to reduce the story they have just heard to:
 - 7 sentences, and then
 - 3 sentences
- The facilitator then asks all learners to work on their own and to reduce the story to just one sentence.
- The facilitator then asks all learners to share their one sentence stories with the group.
- Once all of the learners have shared their sentence, the facilitator can lead a group discussion on the differences and similarities between the ‘one sentence stories’ shared by learners; and on how people can have different perceptions of the same story.

Title	Highlighting positives and negatives in my past
Target Group	Marginalised adult learners and jobseekers
Duration	20-30 minutes
Learning Outcome	Building confidence and self-awareness

Level(s)	Applying and Analysing	
Purpose	Resources/ Materials Needed	
The aim of this activity is to build the oral presentation skills of marginalised adult learners and jobseekers. This activity also helps learners to complete a self-assessment of their lives and to reveal personal characteristics and experiences of each group member.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A room with chairs arranged in a semi-circle. • Blank pieces of card for each learner. • Whiteboard or flipchart and markers for the facilitator. • Pens and note-taking materials for learners. 	
Instructions for facilitator		
<p>This activity is called the “Three pluses, three minuses”. To deliver this activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The facilitator begins asking learners to work in smaller groups of 3 or 4. • The facilitator then gives learners pieces of blank card and a pen each. • Learners are then asked to discuss positive and negative personal characteristics, attributes and past experiences that they have had. • Learners are asked to write down three positive characteristics, attributes, etc. and three negative ones on either side of their card. • Learners then discuss in their groups how to present their positive attributes, characteristics, etc. in the best way possible to potential employers, support or social workers, etc. and how to bypass or reduce the impact of the negative on their relationships with these individuals. • Working in their groups, learners are then asked to present their three pluses and three minuses to other members of their group. • The facilitator can moderate the session by moving from group to group. • Learners should be instructed to be supportive in their group when one of the peers is presenting their pluses and minuses. • After each learner has presented their pluses and minuses to the group, other learners in the group are encouraged to give constructive feedback on their presentation to the individual learner. Through this feedback, as well as gaining tips on how to better present themselves, learners should gain feedback on their use of voice, pitch and tone, their body language and their general presentation skills. 		
Follow-up Activity		

As a short follow-up activity, the facilitator can introduce the positives and negatives of good non-verbal communication by introducing this short activity to the group. To deliver this activity:

- The facilitator can divide each small group into just pairs of learners.
- The facilitator asks learners to repeat their short presentation of their positive and negative attributes to their partner.
- When the learner is presenting their positive attributes, their partner should avoid eye-contact, slouch in their seat, fidget, wriggle and look bored as the learner is speaking.
- When the learner is presenting their negative characteristics, their partner should sit still, make eye-contact, be attentive and practice active listening.
- The pair should then swap, and repeat the activity.
- Once all learners have had the opportunity to play the role of the presenter and the listener, the facilitator can bring the whole group back together and gather some feedback from the group about the importance of non-verbal communication, by asking them how they felt when their partner was looking disinterested and not engaging with them.
- The facilitator can end the session by writing some of the key features of good non-verbal communication on a flipchart and inviting learners to take notes for their future reference.

Title	Prove your values	
Target Group	Marginalised adult learners and jobseekers	
Duration	60 to 120 minutes depending on group size – 5 minutes per learner and 3 minute feedback from the group	
Learning Outcome	Building confidence in public speaking	
Level(s)	Understanding and Applying	
Purpose	Resources/ Materials Needed	
The aim of this activity is to use storytelling to prepare marginalised adults and jobseekers for interviews. Through this short role-play activity, the facilitator is trying to improve the learners' non-verbal communication, body language, presentation skills and their vocabulary, so that they use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A room with chairs arranged in a semi-circle. • Two chairs at the front of the room – one for the facilitator and one for a learner • Other available materials can be used for the role-play scenario, 	

<p>appropriate words and phrases for the scenario they are role-playing – a job interview.</p>	<p>such as a glass of water, table, pens, paper, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whiteboard or flipchart and markers for the facilitator. • Pens and note-taking materials for learners.
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Instructions for facilitator

This activity is called the “Prove your Values”. To deliver this activity:

- The facilitator begins asking for a volunteer to join them at the top of the room, explaining that all learners will have their turn in the ‘hot seat’ throughout the course of the activity.
- Sitting at the top of the group, an interview for a job is simulated – the individual learner can choose the job for which he/she is being interviewed.
- Once the learner shares the job that they are being interviewed for, the facilitator asks the learner to present their skills, values and suitability for the job in the form of a narrative or personal story. The form of the story can be left up to the learner, it can be told like a fairy-tale: ‘Once upon a time, in a land far, far away...’ or it can be told as a real-life account of something personal that happened to them. The aim of the story is to try to convince the “interviewer” that the learner is the right person for the job; highlighting their personal values and qualities that are relevant to the position.
- After each interviewee tells their story, the facilitator leads a short group feedback session with the other group members on the following:
 - How the story presented their character and values;
 - How the story helped the interviewee;
 - Where the words and phrases used appropriate;
 - What was said through body language;
 - What improvements could be made to the story.
- The group are given 2 minutes to provide this feedback to the learner.
- After this 2 minutes, the learner is given 1 minute to respond and to state how they felt the exercise helped them to understand their values and how to present themselves at interview.

Follow-up Activity

As a short follow-up activity, the facilitator can introduce to the group that it is often possible to take a negative experience or story from their past and turn it into a success story – and that this can also often be useful in a job interview situation. To deliver this activity:

- The facilitator can divide each small group into just pairs of learners.
- The facilitator begins by giving a demonstration of a story from their past – told first as a negative story and then repeated with different language as a success story.
- This could be, for example, being fired from a job – but then this could be turned into a success story if this was a turning point which led the facilitator to discover their true passion in life and develop a career from it.
- Working in their pairs, learners take it in turn telling first a negative story from their past and then rephrasing the story to be told as a success story.
- Once all learners have had the opportunity to share their stories, the facilitator brings the whole group back together and leads a whole-group feedback session with the learners about how they found this activity and whether they think it will be helpful to them going forward.