Sheherazade

1001 Stories
for Adult Learning

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Preface

“After nourishment, shelter and companionship, stories are the thing we need most in the world.” (Philip Pullman)

The manual at hand is one of the products of Sheherazade, a Grundtvig Multilateral Project that raises awareness of the potential of storytelling as an educational tool. As part of this project, we developed methodologies and materials for using stories and storytelling in adult teaching and learning.

Using stories and storytelling techniques, the trainer is introducing a great tool within the training process. By offering subject content as a narrative, transformed into images, one improves the quality of the transfer of this content. Introducing stories and storytelling as a tool “performed” by adult learners is a great way to improve creativity, linguistic, social, emotional and artistic skills.

The ultimate beneficiaries of the Sheherazade approach are adult learners in different social and cultural settings, namely low-skilled adults, disadvantaged citizens, newcomers and migrants, and adult foreign language learners. In order to reach these groups, the Sheherazade material and methodologies target initial teacher training students, in-service adult educators, social workers and trainers. Sheherazade also targets storytellers making them aware of the educational value and potential of their art, and to help them find their way to adult education and teacher training organisations. This manual offers ideas and material to help teacher trainers and adult educators apply storytelling in their daily practice.

Chapter 1 and 2 of the manual provide an insight into the advantages of using storytelling in an adult training context and offer a methodological approach for doing so in terms of competence development. Chapter 3 focuses on educational guidelines and offers a set of practical exercises, tips and tricks for direct use in an adult learning environment. Chapter 4 presents a number of good practice examples, collected from all over Europe, revealing the true value of stories and storytelling in a variety of adult learning settings. The Sheherazade partners each piloted an adult training experiment involving stories and storytelling and the behind-the-scene reports on these pilots can be found in Chapter 5 offering extra ideas, motives, settings and approaches.

This manual does not read like a novel from page one to the end but is more a reference that can be consulted according to the needs of the reader. The project website www.sheherazade.eu also offers extra material including training modules for training trainers and material on how to integrate Sheherazade into international Grundtvig projects.

We hope that you will enjoy reading and consulting this manual and that Sheherazade will contribute to the introduction of storytelling in teacher training and adult learning.

On behalf of the Sheherazade Partnership

Guy Tilkin, Project Co-ordinator
Head European Department
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Director
Landcommanderij Alden Biesen
The title of this project comes from the collection of stories known as One Thousand and One Nights. The frame story of the collection is the tale of a Persian king who has been deceived by his first wife. This fills him with hatred against all women; and he decides that every night he will take a new virgin as his wife and kill her at sunrise. After this has been going on for some time, the vizier, a high ranking advisor in charge of finding new wives for the King can no longer find any virgins to send, so it is finally his eldest daughter who must sacrifice her life. As the vizier’s daughter goes to the king’s chamber on their wedding night, her little sister comes and asks to hear a story before she goes to sleep. The King gives the virgin permission to tell. Through the intricate, mysterious, and intriguing stories Scheherazade tells over one thousand and one nights; the young woman is able to change the King. By telling stories, she is able to save many lives, including her own and transform the authoritarian structure of her society.

This is Sheherazade. According to Abdes-salam el Hakouni, Professor of Literature at the University of Mohamed V in Rabat, the tale of Scheherazade is a parable about the power of storytelling:

“The moral is that one should not yield to tyranny. You should use your imagination, be calm and think of love rather than hate, hope rather than despair. If Scheherazade could save her neck for one thousand and one nights, that would be long enough for the King to forget his vengeance. But the key was not a physical weapon. Scheherazade had nothing; only good stories to tell and the ability to tell them well. The lesson is that, if you want to survive, you better have a good story to tell.”

We have carried out this project because we have an unyielding belief that telling and listening to stories can make a difference. We have learned that telling and listening to each other works; we hope you will experience the same.

As shown in the graphic above, the process of storytelling begins with the “incident of a story.” The moment when the storyteller is first introduced to the story, can take place through oral or written communication ("incident of telling" or “incident of a written text”). Stories can also be received through experienced incidents, or can consist of fictional plots. Some storytellers use “spontaneous action” and improvise their story on the spot.

However the storyteller receives a story, there are a host of factors that influence its delivery. Before a story can be told, it must be structured in narrative sequences. The choice of what story to tell is individual and may be based on the personal relevance a storyteller gives to a particular story. The historical and cultural background of the storyteller, the audience, and the story itself are also important to consider.

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“Intertextuality” refers to how a particular story connects with other stories. There could be several versions of the same story across different cultures, for example. Whatever story is told, whether folk tale, myth or other type of tale; there must always be a link to the contemporary moment that makes the story relevant to its audience. There are, however, certain notions drawn from historic mythological tales that continue to be referred to today. The idea of the “Oedipus complex” is one such example.

The grounding of a story in the contemporary moment is achieved in part through interpretation, which a storyteller does intuitively when telling a story. The purpose of telling a particular story can also influence how it is delivered and interpreted. We emphasise that storytelling is both a creative and performing art form and not simply the oral recitation of a written story. It is an interactive activity, which can be distinguished from other types of cultural and social activities. This is illustrated in the graphic with the stage of “aesthetic interaction”. Through the telling of a story, we return to the first stage of the storytelling process, the “incident of the story.” Once told, a story lends itself to being told again or sparking the creation of further stories.

Types of Stories for Oral Storytelling

Storytellers draw from several genres of stories. One popular type of storytelling is traditional storytelling, which may include some of the following: myths, legends, folklore, fairy tales (sometimes known as faerie tales), urban and rural myths, tales from different cultural backgrounds and many more. Some say that these stories are fictional; others hold a heartfelt and often cultural belief in these stories. These stories can often stir something deep inside the members of the audience in the same way that music does.

Another type of story is the personal story. In the context of this project, we define personal stories as stories that are particular to the individual, stories of one’s life, or stories that come from one’s family, neighbour or community. These stories can be completely anecdotal or autobiographical or, like traditional tales, they can be fictional. It is worth noting that personal stories do not necessarily need to be true stories. Whilst telling a true story can be truly cathartic, it is important that the teller feels at ease in telling a personal story.

There is another, more daring, type of story. This is often referred to as improvised storytelling or more simply put a story that has been made up on the spot. These stories can be based on traditional, fictional or absurd stories. This way of telling stories can often reveal something very deep and meaningful about the teller, the audience and/or the setting, in the moment of telling.

What is traditional storytelling?

While the Sheherazade Project incorporates several different types of stories, we are specifically interested in how these stories are told in the traditional storytelling process. When we speak of traditional storytelling, “traditional” does not necessarily mean that the stories told are traditional, but that the act in itself is traditional.

In the curricula at Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, where courses in storytelling are offered by the Department of Technology, Art and Design, traditional storytelling is described as follows:

“Traditional storytelling is an art and a form of communication that creates internal images in the listener’s imagination rather than showing or dramatising visible images. Traditional storytelling takes place as an open and direct two-way communication between the storyteller and the audience and allows for interaction between those present.”

This definition refers to a particular tradition and it might exclude a number of styles and techniques in traditional storytelling. However the definition highlights something essential for traditional storytelling, the ability to create images. This emphasises the active role of the listener in the storytelling session.

In The World of Storytelling by Anne Pellowski, traditional storytelling is described as follows:

“...The entire context of a moment when oral narration of stories in verse and/or prose, is performed or led by one person before a live audience; the narration may be spoken, chanted, or sung, with or without musical, pictorial and/or other accompaniment, and may be learned from oral, printed or mechanically recorded sources; one of its purposes must be that of entertainment or delight and it must have at least a small element of spontaneity in the performance.” 2

This definition might be too broad: it can just as easily apply to monologues, a teacher who communicates in the classroom and so on. Moreover, it excludes the fact that storytellers can perform as a group. Still, these two descriptions say something important about traditional storytelling: the focus is on “inner images”, it happens in a “here and now” situation, the dramatic external “tools” are toned down and improvisation and spontaneity are important parts of communication. The social context i.e. where it takes place, why it is told, the narrative competence, and the public nature are all important elements in the understanding of traditional storytelling. Religion Historian Brita Pollan emphasises the importance of the social context in the book Samiske beretninger (Sami stories):

“An oral narrative requires - like all communication - that the ones who are addressed have the necessary associations. Well-told stories economise on what is necessary to tell, while elaborating exciting motifs that all are happy to hear over and over again.”

In a storytelling situation, it is assumed that there is a common language between storyteller and listener. One characteristic of a successful story is that the storyteller keeps the listener’s attention and interest. The language is both verbal and non-verbal. There are words, rhythms, pauses, gestures, sounds and situational awareness. The entire storytelling vocabulary should be understood within a “unified culture.”

During the storytelling process, the listener will co-create with the storyteller. In other words, the audience will be active on an equal level with the storyteller. It is important that there is “chemistry” right from the very first meeting before the telling and it is the responsibility of the storyteller to create this chemistry. The first assumption is that the storyteller knows his or her audience. (S)he must adjust to the room – what is the room like? how is it set up? It is important to consider the location of the audience in the room. It is the storyteller who must create the community needed for the telling to happen. Anchored in this community, a story involves much more than it seems. In the end, a common understanding of the social context is necessary for the storytelling process.

In short, we can say that traditional storytelling must consist of the following parts: a story (which must have certain components), a storyteller and a listener. These elements are simultaneously present; they constitute and are influenced by the social context. This situation requires spontaneity as an important element.

Today’s traditional storytelling may very generally be divided into the following categories:

- **Traditional storytelling as a performing art:** The storytelling concept here is aimed at performance on a stage. The storyteller works consciously with “theatricality”, not to be confused with the theatrical, i.e. a strong focus on the use of space, dramaturgy, body language and so on. All of this is to provide the listeners with a good aesthetic, reflective and entertaining experience. There are few storytellers whom only perform as storytellers.

- **Corporate storytelling:** uses storytelling in various types of organisations for various functions. Storytelling can be used to improve communication in a business, sharpen a message, communicate a brand, create a community, and so on.

- **Healing or therapeutic storytelling:** This is a popular and growing category of storytelling in Europe. The main focus is on the use of fairy tales and myth archetypes to aid different healing and/or therapeutic processes.

- **Traditional storytelling as a teaching tool:** Here, traditional storytelling is used in formal and non-formal education for children, youth and adults. The Sheherazade project lies within this category and we will henceforth mainly concentrate on this.

We must underline that these categories often flow into each other and are not mutually exclusive. Similarly, professional storytellers often work in several or all of these categories.

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CHAPTER 1

State of the art and needs analysis
Analysis of the Presence of Storytelling in Teacher Training Curricula

While storytelling often has an established presence in education programmes for children, its use as a pedagogical tool is rare in training programmes targeting adults. When included in adult trainer curricula, however, storytelling proves to be adaptable to a wide variety of educational settings; from workshops for counsellors and wellness professionals to training for language teachers and community workers.

The analysis of the presence of storytelling in adult trainer curricula that follows offers an insight into the types of institutions that include storytelling in their training programmes and courses. It also provides an indication of the variety of ways in which storytelling can be used in an adult trainer curriculum. The primary goal of our research was to better understand how storytelling is used in adult trainer curricula and in curricula targeting adult learners in our partner countries. We also discovered how storytelling was integrated into educational settings in more general ways. Individual country results published on the project website (www.sheherazade.eu) provide a non-exhaustive overview of the current landscape in each of our partner countries; below we offer some points of comparison and assessment.

Apart from training focused on teaching storytelling as an art, storytelling seems to be rarely included in formalised adult training curricula as a pedagogical tool. When it is used in adult training, storytelling proves to be very adaptable, however. The examples found by our partners include training targeting adult trainers such as psychology professionals, foreign language teachers, and community workers, as well as adult learners such as migrants or foreign language learners. When storytelling appears in more general adult training curricula, it tends to be part of more informal methodological approaches which are often not written down.

The curricula we have discovered do not include details about the specific activities using storytelling or information about how storytelling techniques have been adapted to the context of the course. The training interventions are usually one-time or short-term sessions. The most structured and long-term use of storytelling takes place in adult training institutions, universities and storytelling centres.

“In the oral tradition, storytelling includes the teller and the audience. The storyteller creates the experience, while the audience perceives the message and creates personal mental images from the words heard and the gestures seen. The audience becomes co-creator of the art.”

(AskDefine.com)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of institutions where storytelling appears in curricula</th>
<th>Target groups</th>
<th>How storytelling appears in curricula for adult trainers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Non-profit organisations</td>
<td>• Adults</td>
<td>• Trainings on the art of storytelling</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Theatre groups</td>
<td>• Professional storytellers</td>
<td>• Storytelling as a tool as part of a counselling session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Individual storytellers (not an institution, but constitute an important source of storytelling training)</td>
<td>• Teachers &amp; adult educators</td>
<td>• Storytelling as part of a language course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Festivals &amp; one-time events</td>
<td>• Actors</td>
<td>• Workshops on storytelling for city and tour guides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adult training institutions, schools and universities (usually in Drama Departments)</td>
<td>• Trainers</td>
<td>• Storytelling in literature course (meanings of symbolism, themes, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Psychology and Well-Being Centres &amp; Courses</td>
<td>• Schools</td>
<td>• Storytelling in public speaking and communication courses</td>
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Our research reveals the need for a formalised written guide on the use of storytelling as a pedagogical tool in adult training and curricula. Such a document could serve as a tool for adult trainers in the following ways:

- Presenting guidelines on how adult training involving storytelling could be structured
- Giving insight into the advantages of using storytelling in an adult training context
- Providing tips on how to use storytelling with different target groups
- Introducing trainers to the technical aspects of storytelling
- Presenting specific storytelling activities and approaches which can be used in adult training
- Providing theoretical background on the use of storytelling in adult training

The upcoming chapters of this manual will offer guidance in how to address these issues.

**Research on Storytelling Methodology**

"Our species thinks in metaphors and learns through stories." (Mary Catherine Bateson, anthropologist)  

Storytelling is an integral part of the human experience, allowing us to understand our world, communicate with others, and express ourselves. The value of stories and storytelling has long been appreciated in educational programmes for children and adolescents, but when it comes to adult learning, formalised methodology and curriculum structures involving storytelling are still lacking.

In an effort to respond to this need, the Sheherazade team has undertaken a research project to see how storytelling is being used in adult training. Our research has shown that adult trainers are interested in learning more about using storytelling in their training activities. Many of the storytellers we spoke with were also excited about the possibilities of applying storytelling as a pedagogical tool. The challenge thus comes in bringing these groups together.

To contribute to the discussion on how storytelling can be introduced to the adult classroom setting:

1. We first looked at the scholarly literature in the field of adult learning theory showing the unique needs of adult learners
2. Next, we examined the methods that structure the storytelling process and give an overview of various branches of storytelling
3. Finally, we evaluated how the characteristics of storytelling can respond to the needs of adult learners. Through the analysis of interviews conducted with more than twenty different storytellers throughout Europe, we present in this chapter a methodological framework for how storytelling can be used as a pedagogical tool for adult learners.

**Adult Learning Theory**

Since Malcolm Knowles’ 1973 book, *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species* 5, was published, adult learning theory has contributed to a growing debate on what strategies are best when working with adult learners. The book includes four assumptions. First, Knowles argues that adult learners prefer self-direction when learning. Next, he asserts that experiential techniques are more useful for adult learners than passive listening. Knowles also finds that adults have specific learning needs generated by life events i.e. moving, getting a new job, marriage, etc. Finally, he states that adults are “competence-based” learners. In other words, adults want to immediately apply what they learn, whether it be a new skill or knowledge.

Like Knowles, in their article “Adult Learning: What Do We Know for Sure?,” Ron and Susan Zemke 6 explore the question of adult learning needs. They present their research as the result of a summary of the scholarship on the subject since the 1970s. They argue that for adults, learning is problem centred, allowing them to cope with life changes or difficult events. When it comes to the ideal setup to provide for the best learning atmosphere, they emphasise the importance of a safe and comfortable environment and encourage adult trainers to be mindful.

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of adults’ egos in the classroom. A good facilitator, they argue, “understands that adults have something real to lose in a classroom. Their egos are on the line when they are asked to risk trying a new behaviour in front of peers” (ibid.).

**Storytelling for learning**

So far, we have seen that unique learning needs are important to consider when working with adults. Interaction, independence, and experience-based learning are all shown to be important for adults, while trust is necessary to ensure the ideal learning environment. We have also examined how the storytelling process can be structured.

Our discussion now turns to how to link the worlds of adult learning and storytelling. We argue that storytelling responds to the unique needs of adult learners, providing a flexible and creative structure, which can work well in the adult training room. We agree with Marsha Rossiter that the narrative approach of storytelling carries implications for both method and content. Ultimately, when used as a pedagogical tool, storytelling can be useful to adult learners in a number of ways. Through a review of the literature on the use of storytelling in different adult training contexts, we have concluded that, when used as a pedagogical tool, storytelling:

a) Helps learners conceptualise the learning process
b) Empowers the adult learner
c) Facilitates communication
d) Inspires personal growth
e) Engages the adult learner

A closer look at each of these themes will demonstrate why storytelling is an ideal tool for courses designed for the adult learner.

a) **Helping Learners Conceptualise the Learning Process**

M. Carolyn Clarke and Marsha Rossiter (ibid.), proponents of “narrative learning theory,” advocate that stories are ideal for helping adults conceptualise the learning process. Similarly, Peg C. Neuhauser suggests that stories are effective as educational tools because they are “believable, ‘rememberable’, and entertaining.” With stories, abstract concepts or ideas can be communicated in understandable everyday language through the angle of human experience. Nanci M. Burk, in her work with at-risk students, has found that “oral sharing” allows her students to conceptualise life experiences. “For many individuals,” she explains, “storytelling yields great insight and a deeper understanding of the world around us, a way of knowing, a search for meaning and a means of reflection.”

b) **Empowering the Learner**

One of the benefits of the shared experience created by using storytelling as a pedagogical tool is that this environment of confidence helps learners to recognise the value of their own experiences and knowledge. As Burk explains, sharing stories allows students to “realise the relevance, validity, and efficacy of their cultural heritage and learning abilities, regardless of cultural differences”. Because they are active participants in the storytelling process, students have a “voice” in the learning experience and can therefore be more engaged and proactive learners (ibid.). As their unique skills and experiences are given value, learners will feel that the contributions they make in the classroom are equally respected.

c) **Facilitating Communication**

One particularity of storytelling is that it is an interactive endeavour. While telling a story empowers learners on the individual level, it also facilitates communication within the group. This interaction contributes to the creation of a community of trust, as we discussed earlier, but it also encourages cross-cultural exchange. As Burk remarks, storytelling gives learners and trainers “the opportunity to cultivate a learning environment open to multicultural dialogues that may provide an understanding of different customs, beliefs and viewpoints.”

From a strictly pedagogical point of view, the exchange that comes when storytelling is used in the learning environment can serve as a learning tool. In a language learning setting for example, Cooper and Stewart argue that one of the ways in which teachers affect the acquisition of language skills is

through modelling. This is the process in which an instructor demonstrates to students what they need to do (saying a word first to demonstrate the correct pronunciation, for example). According to Cooper and Stewart, without interaction between students and teachers, modelling has less impact. Storytelling serves as a creative way for students to participate in this process.

d) Inspiring Personal Growth

Though storytelling is an interactive experience, it can also promote growth and change on an individual level. Susan E. Butcher argues that stories encourage thinking “outside the box”, which may help learners to reconsider things they may have never before questioned. According to Alterio, “Storytelling is an ideal teaching and learning tool, for it takes seriously the need for students to make sense of experience, using their own culturally generated sense-making processes.”

The importance of “reflective dialogue” is another recurring theme in adult learning theory. According to William Isaacs, the author of Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together, reflective dialogue is a process in which “a person becomes willing to think about the rules underlying what he or she does and the reasoning behind thoughts and action and to see more clearly what has been taken for granted.” Storytelling can facilitate this reflective dialogue process. As McDurry and Alterio put it, “our capacity to express ourselves through narrative forms not only enables us to reshape, reassert and reconstruct particular events, it allows us to learn from discussing our experiences with individuals who may raise alternative views, suggest imaginative possibilities and ask stimulating questions”.

e) Engaging the Learner

Because it is an active process, storytelling reduces the passivity of learners. Speaking from his teaching experience, Frances Miley emphasises the ability of storytelling to encourage “un-enthusiastic students” to become more engaged and to take responsibility for their own learning. This is possible because storytelling provides a familiar reference point that can be drawn upon in the learning of a new subject, promoting confidence in adult learners. Simply put, “interested students are engaged students” (ibid.).

After having taught accounting for years, Gary L. Kreps was having trouble keeping students interested. He found that storytelling served not only as an instructional tool to facilitate the learning process, but that it also allowed him to connect with his students:

“Stories personalise my classes, encourage a sense of camaraderie among class members, help illustrate key concepts and theories, and enliven class interactions. The stories help to build a personal bond that transcends the traditional class situation. We all become part of a very special narrative community. We become friends and confidants, as well as valued classmates. I strongly encourage other instructors to develop ways to use stories, to personalise, enrich and humanise their classes.”

Storytelling thus allows adult learners to relate to their trainer and each other as human beings, and not just through the typical teacher-student relationship. Another advantage of storytelling is that it brings the human element to the learning process itself, showing that learning is not just the memorisation of facts, but that it can sometimes involve an emotional component. As Maxine Alterio affirms, storytelling encourages students to “integrate feeling and thought, the subjective and objective ways in which we make judgments about our world.”

According to Alterio, when narrative is used in thoughtful, reflective and formalised ways, it can “encourage co-operative activity; stimulate students’ critical thinking skills; capture complexities of situations; reveal multiple perspectives; make sense of experience; encourage self-review; and construct new knowledge” (ibid.). Ultimately, she argues;

To learn through storytelling is to take seriously the human need to make meaning from experience, to communicate that meaning to others, and, in the process, learn about ourselves and the worlds in which we reside. Meaningful storytelling processes and activities incorporate opportunities for reflective dialogue, foster collaborative endeavour, nurture the spirit of inquiry and contribute to the construction of new knowledge (ibid).

As we have seen, there is a strong theoretical foundation to support the application of storytelling as an educational tool. For storytelling to effectively be applied as a tool, however, a concrete methodological approach for how it can be used in an adult learning environment is necessary. Through our interviews with a number of professional storytellers, we have found several trends that stand out in the methodological approaches they use when integrating storytelling into adult training.

The Use of Storytelling as a Pedagogical Tool: A Methodological Approach

As we spoke with storytellers to see how they use stories in a training context, some commonalities stood out in the methodological approaches they employed when incorporating storytelling into adult training. Below is a proposed methodological structure based on these common themes - it is not necessarily presented in chronological order as to how a course involving storytelling must follow, but rather a list of the different approaches that the storytellers we spoke with deem important. The insights from the storytellers include both general methodological approaches and specific practical activities that are used within these approaches.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparation &amp; Warm-Up</th>
<th>Technical Activities</th>
<th>Workshop Telling</th>
<th>Performance (Optional)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establishing the goals of the training</td>
<td>Training on physical movement / gestures / breathing</td>
<td>Activities that explore specific themes / relate storytelling to goal of the course</td>
<td>Learners “take the stage” to tell their story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating the ambiance of the training</td>
<td>Word games / work on speaking</td>
<td>Trainees practice telling their own stories to each other and listening to the stories of others</td>
<td>The performance serves as both the medium and end result of the learning process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing confidence between participants</td>
<td>Techniques for delivering and remembering a story</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparing participants to think creatively (often done by starting with a story)</td>
<td>Emphasis on the importance of both practical and technical activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“To master powerful and effective communication, to engage people and ensure they remember facts, or to break down barriers of isolation within or between groups, telling stories in some form is essential.” (www.timsheppard.co.uk/story/)
**Preparation/Warm-Up**

Many of the storytellers we spoke with agree that a preparation phase is vital to the successful use of storytelling in an adult learning setting. They find it very important to give learners a chance to “warm up” before working with stories in a training course, especially if they are new to telling and listening to stories as an adult. “Warming up” activities need to not only prepare them for the work that will follow, but also to put them at ease and relieve any tension and nervousness they may have. Chlup and Collins conclude that the use of “warming up” is rarely used in adult education and underline the importance of warming up a group;

“**Icebreakers encourage participation by all, helping a sense of connection and shared focus to develop. Re-energisers can be used as transitions or a time to ‘clear the mind’ encouraging vitality and enthusiasm. Both activities also lead to a free exchange of information and enhanced communication between group members. In addition to simply helping to learn students’ names, we have found using ice-breakers brings humour into the class, establishes rapport, fosters a safe learning environment, and overall assists with content learning”.**”

“**Warming up**” should thus not only be done in the beginning of a course or a school year, but continuously and at each session or each day “re-energisers can be used when energy is low and class morale is lagging, when everyone is not participating, or after a break to re-focus a group” (ibid.).

Four key “warming up” steps were mentioned in our interviews:  
a) Establishing the goals of the training  
b) Creating the ambiance of the training  
c) Establishing confidence between participants  
d) Preparing participants to think creatively (often done by starting with a story)

**a) Establishing Goals**

The storytellers we interviewed in Ireland noted that before storytelling can be used in the classroom, trainers must first be confident in telling stories and enjoy what they are telling. It is useful, they say if the trainer knows the background of the trainees and is able to find stories that will resonate with them. Caroline Sire, a French storyteller, states that before a new training with adults, she asks each learner what they expect from the training and what needs to happen for them to feel satisfied so she can structure the training accordingly. Bulgarian storyteller Leah Davcheva has a less structured routine that changes depending on the particular training course, but she is always alert of the sensitive nature of some stories told by learners. When it is appropriate, she speaks with learners before the start of a training course to see how they feel about the issues that will potentially be addressed during the course.

**b) Creating ambiance**

According to Davcheva, creating the right ambiance is a crucial step to the successful use of storytelling in an adult training context. She argues that trainers need to be sure to know the context of their groups i.e. learners’ backgrounds, goals, etc. and fully grasp what is required when deciding what story to tell or inviting others to tell. In other words, customising or asking for a story to be customised to the group is essential. Willingness to be vulnerable with the group is another prerequisite, she insists. Authenticity is important in engendering trust. Related to this is the congruence between the story one tells and one’s behaviour. Trainers need to remember that they should elicit more stories than they themselves tell. Openness, respect and withholding judgment are also important. Finally, Davcheva adds, a trainer needs to be sure to allow enough time for story sharing when designing a training course.

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c) Establishing Confidence

For storytelling to be used successfully in an adult learning context, adult learners have to feel comfortable sharing their stories with others. French storyteller Jacques Combes recommends reassuring learners of the value of what they have to say. He says adult trainers should put learners at ease and be sure to take their life experiences into account, if they have had a difficult migration experience for example. Combes also finds that a good group dynamic is very important for a successful course. In his current course with recently arrived immigrants, he focuses on creating conviviality among the students so that they are more open and trusting with each other. He does this through exercises on the body, the imagination, speaking, etc. and through group meals in which each learner brings a traditional dish from their respective countries.

Like Combes, British storyteller David Heathfield focuses on building group trust in his courses. His strategy for doing this is to start off by being sure that learners have the same goals in mind when participating in his course. He is sure to make the purpose, structure and content of the course as clear as possible in the description people read when they sign up. He also finds out about the expectations and wishes of participants before and at the start of the course and leads regular group reflections throughout the programme. To make the environment secure for learners, Heathfield sets clear boundaries so that they are able to be playful, experiment and take risks all while feeling supported by him as a trainer and by the other participants. After a course is over, he follows up by making himself available to communicate about learners’ experiences and questions.

Combes and Heathfield are not the only storytellers to emphasise the importance of establishing confidence when using storytelling in adult training. Eirwen Malin, a storyteller based in the United Kingdom, finds it necessary to ensure that a rapport between the trainer and students is built quickly. Malin suggests a comfortable quiet environment and if possible, having a small number of students. Similarly, Suse Weisse thinks that relaxation is crucial to forming a group identity. She recommends giving learners the opportunity to listen to a story at the beginning of a training course. Johan Einar Bjerkem, on the other hand, has a holistic perspective on teaching. The German storyteller always starts his courses by telling an initial story to give students an idea of what they will be learning and of the context of the course. This story serves as a backdrop for the activities that will follow.

d) Preparing participants to think creatively

Preparation activities could include physical movement, games to encourage trust and creativity, name games, voice warm-up activities and concentration exercises, among others. Telling a story is also a great way to start a course because it gives learners the opportunity to just listen and enjoy while conveying the simple joy of telling a story. Afterwards, they can share feedback on what they liked about the story.

Physical activities could include having learners walk around in the learning space. The trainer first tells them to walk as if different parts of their body are leading them (nose, chest, hips, etc.). Then, he or she encourages them to exchange simple sentences with each other such as “what are you doing here?”. They should practice saying the same sentence in different ways: speaking through their teeth, full-lips, wide-open mouth, etc. to give the same words very different meanings.

Finally, to create the right atmosphere for story sharing, it is a good idea to adjust the learning space before the course begins. The typical classroom setup of rows of desks facing the front may not be conducive to encouraging sharing, so it may be better to have learners sit in a circle and to light candles or to have some other “ritual” to set the scene.

Technical Activities

Technical activities are the “meat and bones” of the storytelling process. These activities allow students to improve their storytelling skills while also working on skills more closely related to the main goals of the course. In a language course, for example, speaking exercises can make for a better story and also improve language skills. Our storytellers find the following types of activities important:

- Training on physical movement/gestures/breathing
- Word games/work on speaking
- Techniques for delivering and remembering a story
- Emphasis on the importance of both practical and technical activities
- Importance of Dialogue

One of the challenges inherent in storytelling is the process of going from the written language to conveying ideas orally. Caroline Sire emphasises the importance of working with learners
so that they are able to listen to words not only for their meaning, but also their sound (rhythm, word choice, etc.).

Storyteller Fred Versonnen argues that it is important to familiarise learners with the concept of “natural storytelling.” The trainer should show learners “the door” that leads them to the way of storytelling by opening it just a crack and allowing them to go through it themselves, he explains. In addition to technical language and communication skills, Suse Weisse emphasises that there are also emotional level skills that can be developed in a course involving storytelling such as self-confidence and openness.

According to Diane Sophie Geerts, a workshop should always be a subtle mix of theoretical contribution and practical applications. Every workshop should take into consideration respect and integration of each person, she argues. The capacities of every participant should be valued so that they can use the proposed tools freely and without fear. Like Weisse, she emphasises both technical and emotional elements of storytelling, highlighting that a training involving storytelling should allow learners to discover not only the richness of storytelling, but also the more technical aspects of oral expression.

The importance of dialogue is emphasised by a number of storytellers. One related theme in adult learning theory is the notion that facilitation by definition should be collaborative. Storyteller Margaret Wenzel incorporates this notion into her work with adults, highlighting that learners bring their own expertise and experience to a course. “I say, ‘I am the storyteller and you are guides. Let’s meet in the middle,’” she says. “They notice that they are appreciated in what they already know, and through this training, they get the possibility to reflect upon their work.” This collaborative approach has yielded results for Wenzel and her students. “They use the theory, which is the conclusion of our work together, in their profession and practice,” she explains.

A number of storytelling activities focus on improving technical skills. One helpful skill for learners to develop is being able to remember a story by learning it according to a basic “skeleton” of the plot (description of setting, conflict, resolution, etc.). To develop more elaborate storytelling skills, trainers can use the “guided tour” activity with their learners. In this activity, after listening to a story, learners, working with a partner, will walk around the room. One partner will serve as a tour guide and give a detailed description of what he or she sees, drawing on details from the story (the castle and its shining minarets, the dark forest, the hermit’s cave, etc.). The person that is being guided asks questions and always wants to know more.

Other activities focus on promoting dialogue. Games such as “Gossiping“, “Interrupter” and “Fortunately/Unfortunately,” all have this purpose. Gossiping, for example, is a humorous exercise where people sit in duos and elaborate on a story they have all listened to, filling the gaps by gossiping (ex: “Have you heard what that Snow White was up to recently? Living in a commune with these seven strange men, apparently they were in the diamond trade…”).

In the activity, “Interrupter,” there is one main storyteller who improvises a story and several interrupters who occasionally interject with an unrelated word that has to be incorporated into the story, often changing the direction of the story.

Similarly, “Fortunately/Unfortunately” is a group storytelling activity. One person starts improvising a story and speaks for about a minute. He ends his part of the story with “fortunately...” or “unfortunately...” and the next person takes over the story from this point.

**Workshop**

Fred Versonnen argues that storytelling is an essential part of the teaching process. He links the characteristics of a good storyteller with those of a good educator: knowing your audience and being interesting, etc. He explains: “When I give courses training teachers, I always ask: ‘Who are the teachers that you remember from your youth? They typically describe two categories of teachers: the ones who were very bad and the ones who were very good. We won’t talk about the first category but about the second. When I ask them why they think these teachers were very good, they give two reasons. The first reason is their ability to be very human and the second reason is there capacity to teach their subjects in a passionate way, in a narrative way.”

Like Versonnen, we feel that storytelling can be a part of almost any curriculum. The workshop portion of an adult training involving storytelling thus focuses on the specific goal of the course and how storytelling can be used to achieve it. Some examples of course topics that would be ideal for storytelling include language learning and courses promoting the integration of at-risk groups. The possibilities for incorporating storytelling into adult learning are endless.
Storyteller Aideen McBride gives the example of how storytelling could benefit adult learners with low literacy levels to learn a new language. McBride believes that storytelling could be a way for them to expand their vocabulary and become comfortable with the language before they even have to open a book. She explains that storytelling is a “very honest and informal way of teaching where you can ‘slip the message in’ without intimidating your trainees. If you have people who are nervous or scared by the formality of learning,” McBride continues, “all that can be left aside while the story is being told.” Erwen Malin asserts that exploring similarities and differences among stories from different cultures can provide a starting point for discussion and could thus be used as a tool to enhance inclusion and intercultural dialogue.

Incorporating storytelling can liven up learning activities. Rien Van Meensel suggests, for example, that storytelling could be used in a language learning context. “If you use stories in a classroom in a language course, you can introduce expressions such as ‘she is as beautiful as ...’ Van Meensel explains. ‘Learners can retell the story from another point of view. The teacher can create a situation in which the learners are interested in the story, so they will broaden their vocabulary in the language they are learning.”

**Telling**

In the performance step of a training involving storytelling, learners have the opportunity to tell their own stories to each other and listen to the stories of others. Choosing the right story is very important. Versonnen says that when trainers are telling their own stories, they need to learn how to do three things: tell a story in images, share their passion, and create excitement, suspense and tension when telling a story. Nick Bilbrough typically ends a weeklong course with the participants giving a performance of a story that they had been working on all week.

**Performance**

Because telling a story alone in front of an audience can be intimidating for some learners, it is helpful to allow them to prepare ahead of time. Trainers can have learners form trios. Each trio would be told a different short story. They would then re-tell the story to each other, dividing the story into beginning, middle and end. Then, the trainer would mix the trios up so that there would be three different stories in each trio. Each person would tell his or her story to the two other members of their trio. In the end, everyone would have told a full story to an audience and have learned three new stories.

Doris Reininger suggests that a preparation activity that could be useful for smaller groups would be to allow learners to work on dialogue exercises in pairs to give them more confidence before passing on to the monologue phase. She emphasises the importance of giving the narrator time to tell his story, even if it is not linguistically perfect and encouraging the other learners to be patient as well.

Caroline Sire uses the performance period of her trainings to encourage self-reflection. She likes to work with biographical accounts by approaching them from different angles, having the students participate in memory activities in which they tell the stories of others and are able to take a step back from their own experiences as they share their story with others.

Through a review of the literature on adult learning needs and a reflection on the principles of storytelling, we have endeavoured to create a methodological approach for using storytelling as a pedagogical tool. The scholarship on the use of storytelling in an adult learning setting has highlighted its multi-functionality and strength in fostering learning, esteem and cross-cultural communication among adult learners. Ultimately, as we have outlined in this chapter, storytelling is a powerful tool when applied to the adult learning context.

“Storytelling is interactive, immediate and very personal, a negotiation between this teller and this audience at this time and in this place, never to be duplicated.” (R.C. Roney, 1996)
CHAPTER 2

Storytelling and competence development
**Introduction**

In this chapter we briefly present the different competences related to language learning and social cohesion and the requirements for “competence oriented teaching and learning”. Then we argue that education and training approaches involving storytelling not only address these competences but also fit the competence driven approaches for adult learning.

**What is a Competence?**

A competence is the ability to apply a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes in a certain situation with a certain quality. So competences consist of three interrelated ingredients:

1) A knowledge component (the understanding part)
2) A value component (including values, beliefs and attitudes)
3) A behavioural component (the overt behavioural repertoire)

It is defined as a holistic synthesis of these components. This implies that what matters is not only what we know about things, but more importantly what we are able to do with this knowledge, how we feel about it and whether we are able to go on developing our abilities.

Since Sheherazade pays most attention to competences for social cohesion and foreign language learning we take a closer look at the specifications for these competences as defined in The European Reference Framework for Key Competences:

**Communication in foreign languages** “…is based on the ability to understand, express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in an appropriate range of societal and cultural contexts (in education and training, work, home and leisure). It also calls for skills such as mediation and intercultural understanding.”

**Social competences** “…include personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and cover all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, and particularly in increasingly diverse societies, and to resolve conflict where necessary.”

**Intercultural competences** (Council of Europe definition) enable one to:

- Understand and respect people who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations from oneself
- Respond appropriately, effectively and respectfully when interacting and communicating with such people
- Establish positive and constructive relationships with such people
- Understand oneself and one’s own multiple cultural affiliations through encounters with cultural ‘difference’

By combining social and intercultural competences and foreign language learning, Sheherazade covers the core competences for social cohesion.

**Competence Oriented Education and Learning**

Competence based learning and competence based education do not consist of traditional teaching situations. The idea is that learners need to be actively involved in the learning situation. They learn best in meaningful contexts, and in co-operation and interaction with others and with their environment.

The most distinctive features of this approach may be summarised as follows:

- **Meaningful contexts** - in which learners will experience the relevance and the meaning of the competences to be acquired in a natural way
- **Multidisciplinary approach** - integrative and holistic
- **Constructive learning** - a process of constructing one’s own knowledge in interaction with one’s environment, rather than as a process of absorbing the knowledge others try to transfer to you
- **Cooperative, interactive learning** - with peers, coaches etc.

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• Discovery learning – learning is not a process of receiving information, but should be embedded in a discovery based approach
• Reflective learning - the process of ‘learning to learn’
• Personal learning – the need of the learner to be able to identify with the contexts, the people, the situations and interests that are included in the learning domains involved. (Adapted from “Aqueduct”21)

All good practices and pilot projects presented by Sheherazade give proof that learning situations involving storytelling are extremely well fit for a competence oriented approach. Stories are not only used as carriers of cultural and historical knowledge and values but also directly lead to practical exercises.

• Each time the sessions are interactive, participants act as an active audience or as co-tellers.
• Sessions involving personal storytelling are obviously meaningful and personal but also sessions involving traditional stories offer values and meaning that are relevant to personal development and life.
• The storytelling sessions usually are an introduction to and offer topics for further activities in a constructive and multi-disciplinary approach; telling in peer groups, creating a new story, creative exercises etc.
• Learners working with peers can discuss the meaning of story elements.

Offering Competences for Language Learning and Inclusion

A large number of competences can be developed by engaging in storytelling. These competences are related to oracy, literacy, communication but also to cultural awareness, identity building and social skills. A significant body of research has been undertaken on the role of storytelling in competence development but practically all of it refers to children or young people. Examples of reports of such research, by Will Coleman22 or Robin Mello23, can be consulted on the web. The Sheherazade team focuses on adults. Each pilot project organised by project partners, involved action research as to improve the efficiency of the learning and to better monitor the outcomes. It also provided an overview of the effects and benefits of using storytelling in an adult learning context.

“In Trainers often make people write a story and call it storytelling. It is better to do it the other way around: first sketching the story (with drawings), then telling the story and only afterwards writing it down.” Ida Junker, 2013

Oracy and Literacy: Gaining Verbal Skills

Language lies at the root of our culture. It is important that we give adults and less advantaged groups, rich experiences with words, sounds, intonation and rhythm whilst constructing meaning through the use of language. The ability to speak well is important to gain access to society. Adults should be encouraged to practice these skills. Sharing stories can give adults an awareness that can help them speak, listen, read and write.

Many educators and researchers claim that storytelling contributes to oracy and literacy development. According to Lucy Parker Watkins24 these skills include memory development, observation skills, vocabulary development, sequencing, problem solving, engagement in language play and making predictions. Listening to stories is a social experience developing oral narrative. Traditional stories usually offer a more extended vocabulary and a more complex grammar than plain conversation. The NCTE25, in the Position Statement from their Committee on Storytelling, states “Listeners encounter both familiar and new language patterns through story. They learn new words or new contexts for already familiar words”.

Ruth Kirkpatrick26 in Stories Always (2012), claims that storytelling encourages listening skills. “Listeners are motivated to hear what will happen next … Attentiveness is won partly by the

25 National Council of Teachers of English on: http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/teachingstorytelling
Alchemy of telling, the rapport between teller and listener, and partly by the story itself”. Storytelling also encourages talking. “This is partly because the synergy of telling and listening have already set up a ‘conversation’, however one-sided it may seem on the surface while the tale is being told.” (ibid.)

The NCTE also claims that “students who search their memories for details about an event as they are telling it orally will later find those details easier to capture in writing. Writing theorists value the rehearsal, or prewriting, stage of composing. Those who regularly hear stories subconsciously acquire familiarity with narrative patterns and begin to predict upcoming events. Both beginning and experienced readers call on their understanding of patterns as they tackle unfamiliar texts. Then they re-create those patterns in both oral and written compositions. Learners who regularly tell stories become aware of how an audience affects a telling, and they carry that awareness into their writing.”

Communication Skills

According to Sean Buvala’s27 website, storytelling is the “mother” of all communications. Every art form relies on story to convey meaning. Buvala presents three foundational reasons why storytelling helps to improve presentation skills:

Storytelling teaches you to think on your feet. When you learn to be a good storyteller you must learn to adjust your energy and pace to match the audience reaction.

Storytelling teaches you to be spontaneous. As a storyteller, you learn to rely on your ability to “see” a story as it happens. Storytelling helps you to think about the deeper meanings of your content. As you adapt personal and world stories to your presentations, you will start thinking deeper about the meaning of your communications.

Imagination, Creativity and Learning to Learn

Storytelling involves imagination and the use of language and gestures to create scenes in the mind of the listener. Both telling a story and listening to a well-told tale encourage adults to use their imagination.28 Luke E. Yackley29 puts it nicely: “as we hear a story, the brain actively fabricates the scene and character and acts them out on the stage in our brains. Obviously, each person constructs a different stage and our characters will probably look different, but we construct the scene that will be meaningful and relevant to each of us in a highly personal way”. Developing imagination contributes to self-confidence and personal motivation, and it empowers adults to consider new and inventive ideas: “through engagement with an imagined world, the listener also develops crucial skills in problem solving, and in considering options and consequences”30.

Cultural Awareness and Identity

The term “identity” denotes a person’s sense of who he/she is and the self-descriptions to which a person attributes significance and value. Most people use a range of different identities to describe themselves, including both personal and social identities (Martyn Barrett e.a.). “Storytelling can be an interesting pathway to discover how we came to be who we are as people, as families, and as subcultures within the larger society”31. Stories offer a window into the culture from which they come, as well as a mirror of humanity. Storytelling provides adults with a sense of history, a sense of community, a sense of generations, a sense of heritage.

Storytelling is a way of expressing individual and cultural identity, inviting the listener to identify with “the other”. Anyone who gets to tell his/her story and is heard; finds a sense of belonging within the group. Being heard and hearing others creates bonds of understanding and respect. “Both tellers and listeners

27 Buvala, S. on www.seantells.com
28 Forest, H. on www.storyarts.org
29 Yackley, L.E. Storytelling, a Key to Adult Learning, 2007.
31 Forest, H. on www.storyarts.org
find a reflection of themselves in stories. Through the language of symbol, children and adults can act out through a story the fears and understandings not so easily expressed in everyday talk. Story characters represent the best and worst in humans. By exploring story territory orally, we explore ourselves, whether it is through ancient myths and folktales, literary short stories, modern picture books, or poems”.32 Through stories we also develop understanding and tolerance for differences.

**Social Skills**

We can again quote Ruth Kirkpatrick (ibid.): “close engagement with a story helps with the development of empathy and emotional literacy (…) by hearing another’s difficulty as described in a story, the listener can empathise and see the results of the protagonist’s actions. The process enhances self-reflection and self-expression, besides providing potential role models”.

“Storytelling based on traditional folktales is a gentle way to guide young people toward constructive personal values by presenting imaginative situations in which the outcome of both wise and unwise actions and decisions can be seen. Becoming verbally proficient can contribute to a student’s ability to resolve interpersonal conflict non-violently. Negotiation, discussion, and tact are peace making skills.”33

**Conclusion**

Storytelling is highly appropriate to lower the threshold to education and to create innovative and attractive pathways to the acquisition of key competences: literacy, foreign languages, cultural awareness, and social and civic competences. Introducing storytelling in adult learning will also improve the attractiveness of and access to adult learning, especially for low-skilled adults, disadvantaged citizens and migrants. Storytelling is a complementary language, compared with the more abstract language often used in educational programmes; programmes in which many adults, from our target groups, have not been successful. Therefore storytelling has great potential to attract and motivate adults to learn.

“Narrative is a fundamental structure of human meaning making.” (J. Bruner, 1986)

32 National Council of Teachers of English on: http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/teachingstorytelling
33 Forest, H. on www.storyarts.org
CHAPTER 3

Educational guidelines and approaches
**Introduction**

Using stories in a learning environment is really nothing new. Many of us grew up with a teacher who would take out the Tales of Grimm or Anderson at the end of the day and plunge the class into the fabulous world of knights, princesses and malevolent characters. However, teachers tend to discard the telling of stories as pupils grow older and in adult learning, stories are often prose pieces used for grammar exercises.

In this chapter we detail a range of practical storytelling exercises that we have trialled and tested with adult learners in a variety of learning settings through our pilot training programmes outlined in Chapter 5. We are convinced storytelling has the ability to motivate learners and to increase their engagement in the learning process.

Introducing new creative techniques such as storytelling into the learning process and curriculum can be a daunting prospect at first, even for the more experienced of trainers and teachers. However, the exercises compiled in this chapter can be easily integrated into training programmes without the need to become a professional storyteller. Stories can prove an interesting means to achieve learning goals as teachers and trainers find a story or storytelling technique that most suits their teaching requirement. Whether one chooses to work with traditional or personal stories will depend on the goals of the training programme. Traditional folk tales for instance are particularly suitable for language learning environments, where repeating words and phrases is common practice. This repetition provides scaffolding which supports the learning of collocations, structures and pronunciation. It is not only words and phrases that are repeated in storytelling. Sounds and gestures can also be repeated supporting the learning of language.

Morgan and Rinvolucri\(^\text{34}\) give some interesting examples for teachers involved in teaching grammar structures like the present perfect continuous starting from the tale of Goldilocks. Often a particular grammar structure will naturally occur as part of the repetition, the repetition being central to the story. Using storytelling in the learning environment can upset some didactical approaches teachers and trainers are used to, such as correcting mistakes. As language teachers, one must decide if and when to correct the mistakes heard. Many teachers believe that only by systematically correcting the mistakes learners make, they will learn to speak a language properly, but not all mistakes have the same importance. In the kind of exercises connected to storytelling, mistakes against meaning are of greater importance than mistakes of more formal aspects.

In the storytelling exercises, the most important goal for the learners is to gain self-confidence in speaking and being understood even if that means that the language they produce still contains many mistakes. Correcting, therefore should only take place when the learner is preparing for the actual telling or exercise and preferably in a one-to-one exchange.

Correcting could be done implicitly, for example by using certain hand movements that the trainer frequently uses in class (to indicate a certain structure, ….) or by recasting, this is rephrasing correctly what the learner produced, thus implicitly correcting the mistake. It could also be done more explicitly, but in this case the trainer should focus on meaning rather than on form. The trainer might help out a learner with a word or phrase that the learner cannot remember, or might correct the wrong use of a word. If a trainer wants to focus on formal language aspects as well, (s)he should choose one or two aspects to focus on. The learners then are aware they should try to focus on this aspect. For example, a trainer might say that most stories are told in the past tense, and thus learners should try to use the correct forms of the verb. In this case, there is also a chance that peer correction will take place and that learners will help each other finding the correct verb form when preparing for the storytelling exercise. A teacher might also choose to ‘use’ the story to exercise certain language aspects, and to provide an exercise for doing so. In the ‘technical activities’ section, exercises 20 and 21 are examples of such activities.

At the end of this chapter you will find some tips and tricks to help when using storytelling in the learning environment. When you come across stories in your search, the ‘skeleton’ of a story is useful to remember also. Example of a ‘skeleton’ The Two Doors (ibid.).

The King never condemned criminals to death – this is what he did:
The criminal was led into an arena with 2 doors
Behind one a ravenous tiger
Behind the other a beautiful girl
The man did not know which door was which
Had to choose – be eaten or marry the girl
This was fair – as the man’s fate was in his own hands

The King had a daughter
She fell in love with a poor soldier
The King was furious – and the man was arrested
In the arena he looked up at the King and his daughter
The princess knew which door was which
What signal did she give her lover?

Practical exercises

Through the interviews conducted with the storytellers, some commonalities stood out in the methodological approaches they employed when incorporating storytelling into adult training. Chapter 1 outlined four key phases and in the following sections we illustrate each phase with some examples taken from the pilot projects. Special attention is given to the practical use of the exercises, the materials needed and the role of the teacher/trainer in the exercise.

Preparatory phase – Warming up exercises

Exercise 1: Morning circle

Target group: Native speakers or level A2 +
Objectives: Monologues
Sharing everyday life experiences
Practicing sentence structures
Taking the floor
Material: None
Shape: Group exercise, standing in a circle
Duration: 10 minutes

Content and procedure:
Participant 1 stands in the centre of the circle and tells about one or another incident from this morning, e.g. “This morning I have seen a group of blind children who got on the bus.” Participant 2 releases participant by tapping him/her on the shoulder, taking his/her place in the circle centre and telling about an own observation and so on. This exercise can easily be done over and over again. With an experienced group or when exercises last longer, in most cases links or connections between own observations derive from themselves.

Variant:
Participant 1 starts with a true observation, participant 2 amends the observation and it goes on and on like that. The participants are free to choose whether they want to add true observations or freely make up supplements.

Exercise 2: Question, answer, comment

Target group: Native speakers, or level A2 +
Objectives: Practicing modal verbs and other grammatical peculiarities
Practicing conjugations
Word order in questions and answers
Training action-reaction
Material: Ball
Shape: Group exercise, standing in a circle
Duration: 4 - 8 minutes

Content and procedure:
Starting questions are sent from participant to participant with the impulse accompanied by a ball throw. It is about fast reactions and the collection of auxiliary verbs. (“Do you have?” “Do you want?” “Do you need?” “Do you like?” “Can you?” “May you?”)

Now the questions shall be completed. The receiver of the question replies, the participants on the right and on the left of the receiver repeat the answer in the third person, e.g. Are you good at cooking, Are you a good cook?” “Yes, I am good at cooking” “Yes, he is good at cooking”. Then the receiver asks a new question and throws the ball.

Variant: The participants on the right and on the left may as well conjugate in another way, e.g. “We are good at cooking as well”. Or they may comment with an indirect answer, e.g. “He said that you were good at cooking” – there are no limits to the ideas of the language teacher.
**Exercise 3: Meditative warm-up**

Target group: Adult Learners  
Objectives: The story does not just happen ‘in front’ with the storyteller: just as much work is being done by the audience, the act of listening is just as important as the telling. This exercise draws attention to the underlying silence beneath all stories, and participants are allowed to meet each other in a non-verbal way.  
Material: Chairs  
Shape: Group exercise, sitting in a circle  
Duration: 2 minutes

**Content and procedure:**
Sitting in a circle, the trainer invites participants to meet with the eyes; a short but sustained acknowledgement of everyone in the circle. Try not to miss anyone out.  
Do it again, but this time start by looking at the hands, then move up to the eyes.  
Simple yet powerful, this is recommended to ‘bring inward’ a group that is quiet chatty and unfocused.

---

**Exercise 4: Musical Chairs**

Target group: Adult Learners  
Objectives: Presentation exercise, icebreaker  
Material: Enough chairs to have one less chair than participants  
Shape: Chairs are arranged in a circle in the centre of the room  
Duration: 15 minutes

**Content and procedure:**
The group forms a circle, in which there are fewer chairs than participants, for example if there are 10 participants, there should be 9 chairs. They then walk around the chairs until the trainer says “stop.” The remaining person who is unable to find a chair has to stand in the middle of the circle. He/she has to say a statement (ex. “I speak more than two languages,” “I wear glasses”, “I love horror movies,” etc.). Everyone who agrees with or matches the statement has to then stand up and find a new chair. This leaves a new person in the centre of the circle without a chair and the process begins again.

---

**Exercise 5: Cardinal Points Exercise**

Target group: Adult Learners  
Objectives: Comprehension and oral expression  
Material: None  
Shape: This activity takes place in a room where the chairs have been removed to allow for movement.  
Duration: 15 minutes

**Content and procedure:**
The trainer points out the cardinal points in the room. Each participant must position himself/herself according to where they live or their country of origin. The country/city where the training takes place is represented in the centre of the room. After positioning themselves around the room, participants discuss their cultural differences and similarities.

---

**Exercise 6: Make sentences**

Target group: Beginners, native speaker or language learners  
Objectives: Sentence structure  
Material: Several objects  
Shape: Circle  
Duration: 20 minutes

**Content and procedure:**
Pass around an object and charge someone successively with a task: ask a question, tell a lie, a truth, a shout, yesterday was, tomorrow will, one day it will, the most beautiful/saddest memory, make it talk,… e.g. a rose, a book,…

---

**Exercise 7: Clapping exercises**

Target group: Adult Learner  
Objectives: Group cohesion, ice breaker  
Material: None  
Shape: Group exercise, standing in a circle  
Duration: 4 - 8 minutes

**Content and procedure:**
The power of the circle cannot be underestimated. It is the opposite of standard teaching with a teacher in front of a class. Here, everyone is equal. All circle work deeply affects the group.
1. Pass along the clap: standing in a circle, turn to your neighbour and clap your hands, they pass it on. Try to be as quick as possible. Encourage the group to listen to the music and rhythm of the clapping as it travels around the circle.

2. Undo the circle and have participants walking through the room in random ways. Still ‘passing the clap’ by making eye-contact and clapping at someone; they pass it on to someone else. Establish a very quick rhythm, no over-thinking, pass it to the first person you see.

3. Simultaneous claps: same as step 2, but now the person who receives the clap has to clap in perfect unison with the person who’s sending them the clap. Then they pass it on in the same way, more difficult as it requires eye contact and coordination.

4. Both groups in silence choose a character. When they are ready, they line up across each other, turning their backs to each other. The storyteller counts to three, the learners turn and all together make their gesture or sound. If the first group has chosen Samson and the second Delilah, then the second group has won, and so on...

---

**Exercise 8: Samson and Delilah**

- **Target group:** Adult Learners
- **Objectives:** To create an open and relaxed atmosphere and also to sharpen concentration
- **Material:** None
- **Shape:** Group exercise, divide class in 2 groups. Line them up across from each other with their backs to each other
- **Duration:** 8 minutes

**Content and procedure:**

1. The warming-up is a variation of the children’s game ‘paper, stone, scissors’. The storyteller mimes this game. As some learners might know the game, they can more easily understand its system.

2. The storyteller introduces the characters from the story of Samson and Delilah. The lion is strong. He can’t be beaten, except by Samson. Samson has more power, and his power is hidden in his hair. No one knows his secret… except Delilah. She has power over Samson, because she has scissors. So Delilah is stronger than Samson, Samson is stronger than the Lion and the Lion is stronger than Delilah.

3. Every character has its own gesture:
   - Samson: a battle cry and clenched fists
   - The Lion: roar as a lion
   - Delilah: make a movement of scissors with your fingers

**Exercise 9: Yes/No: Black/White**

- **Target group:** Adult Learners
- **Objectives:** Introduces playfulness, quick thinking and group cohesion
- **Material:** None
- **Shape:** Sitting or standing in a circle
- **Duration:** 3 minutes

**Content and procedure:**

This is a very simple ‘call and response’ exercise, the instructions to the group are: when I say ‘yes’ you say ‘no’, when I say ‘no’ you say ‘yes’ (same with black and white). Call out and let them respond in unison.

Try things like:
- Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes
- No, yes, yes, yes, no
- Black, yes, no, white

---

**Exercise 10: Name game with stories**

- **Target group:** All ages, particularly good with adult learners
- **Objectives:** This game is an unpretentious storytelling ‘babbling’ exercise designed to kick start talking in a safe and fun way. It also helps group members to get to know each other’s names, to begin concentrating on a shared activity together, creating focus and connection. Laughter strengthens the bonds in the group.
- **Material:** Chairs
- **Shape:** Chairs in a circle with no tables
- **Duration:** 15 - 20 minutes
Content and procedure:
Half of the group sits on chairs in a circle, while the other half stand behind these chairs, with their hands behind their own backs. One chair is left empty, but with a participant behind it. The person behind the empty chair says the name of someone sitting in the circle. The person named dashes for the empty chair while the person behind their chair tries to stop them fleeing by catching them before they leave their seat. As participants get the hang of the game it gets harder to attract someone without them being caught. At this point whoever is behind the empty chair starts making up a little story and ‘drops’ a participant’s name into it, to catch the ‘catchers’ unawares. After a while, let those who sit and those who stand up swap.

Technical activities

The first exercises are technical storytelling activities. They help the learner to put their images (sound, taste, smell…) into language, or to see the frame of the story more clearly. Then we focus on exercises that have a more ‘language training’ form. It can be useful to draw the attention of the learner on certain language aspects to prevent them from making mistakes or having trouble with this aspect when actually telling the story. The storytelling exercises are often linked to a story the trainer told previously, or a story that might follow. Therefore trainers should see these exercises as examples and use them in a creative way and adapt them as needed.

Exercise 1: On the trail of the senses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target group:</th>
<th>Advanced participants, native speakers or up from level B1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objectives:</td>
<td>Describing sensations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stimulating the imagination of the participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participants practice speaking freely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material:</td>
<td>Pencil and notepad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape:</td>
<td>Circle of chairs, without tables. This is partly a group exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration:</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Content and procedure:
1. The trainer announces an imaginary journey and asks the participant to close their eyes. “Imagine you are on holiday. Imagine you are on the beach. In front of you lies the wide sea, under your feet there is warm, soft sand. The sky is clear blue. What does it smell like here? Can you hear anything? What else do you see besides the sky and the sea? What do you feel on your skin, in your hair? How do you feel? Do you have a certain taste on your tongue?” The trainer asks the participants to open their eyes again and to return to the learning environment. Provide room for feedback and questions.

2. For the next storytelling exercise the 5 senses are assigned to 4 groups: a) Hearing; b) Taste and smell; c) Touch; d) Sight. The participants are divided into four groups as well (A,B,C,D). In a mutual conversation they collect sensations from their category.

3. In a plenary session, the ideas of the participants are collected.

Variant: describing sensory perceptions of different places (fictitious (e.g. haunted castle, paradise) or real (e.g. mountain peak, train station, wine cellar), spontaneous associating in the group is also suitable for participants with good language skills.

Further advances on the exercises:
1. Each group receives a card with a (real, well known) place. In the small groups the participants collect sensations from all categories (A, B, C, D) and subsequently give the other participants a description of the place without naming it. The rest of the group can guess.

2. Practice the description of sensory perceptions through re-narration of a familiar story (see exercise “chain fairy tales”)

Exercise 2: Use of the voice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target group:</th>
<th>Beginners, native speakers or language learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objectives:</td>
<td>Make one’s voice heard and show that by using your imagination your voice changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material:</td>
<td>No material needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape:</td>
<td>Chairs in a circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration:</td>
<td>50 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Content and procedure:
The trainer starts with some voice exercises and then teaches a simple song to be sung in a circle afterwards. The participants need to sing the song imagining various situations:
• Singing in the shower
• Your partner/friend is sick, has ended the relationship
• You are lost in a forest and a wolf is crying
• You won a song contest and you are singing the winning song

Questions: What is the difference? Did the situation have an influence on the way you used your voice? Describe the changes.

Exercise 3: Working on listening skills

Target group: Beginners, native speakers or language learners
Objectives: To learn the difference between listening and hearing
To be conscious that you can influence listening yourself
Material: No material needed
Shape: In pairs, back to back
Duration: 20 - 30 minutes

Content and procedure:
A good storyteller needs a good listener. There is a difference between listening and hearing. How do you show you are listening? Just hearing means only your sense of hearing works and that you are able to catch sounds and noise. Listening means you are willing; you are attentive and focussed. Carry out this exercise in pairs, whispering a secret (true or not) back to back. Afterwards turn the chairs, but let one person fiddle, talk, and wriggle while the other one is talking. Later show interest by gestures, eyes, facial expression, words. Alternate.

Exercise 4: Three pluses, three minuses

Target group: Unemployed adults
Objectives: To improve oral presentation skills
To reveal own personal characteristics
To get to know each other better
Material: Small empty paper cards for each participant
Shape: Circle of chairs, small group exercise with 3-4 participants
Duration: 20 - 30 minutes

Content and procedure:
Participants are encouraged to think about and write down on both sides of the paper cards 3 positive and 3 negative sides of their character and to think how to stress the positive or bypass the negative, if they present themselves. Each participant in the group presents their positives and negatives in front of others through stories. The session is moderated by the storyteller joining one or another group.

Exercise 5: Prove your values

Target group: Unemployed adults
Objectives: Expression with appropriate words
Take into account body language
Broaden communication skills
Improve oral presentation skills
Material: All available materials can be used – glass of water, pen, chair and bureau, etc.
Shape: Semicircle; storyteller and one of participants in front of the group
Duration: 5 minutes per participant

Content and procedure:
The interview for a real job is improvised with the participant. In the beginning the participant is asked to choose the job for which he wants to apply and to be interviewed. Next, the storyteller in the role of interviewer leads the interview in such a way that the participant is asked to tell a narrative or personal story in order to prove that (s)he is the appropriate person for the desired position or to prove through stories the values of her/his personal characteristics. After the interview all the participants discuss how the story represents the person, how it helps, how words could be used in an appropriate way, what is said through the body language, and so on.

Exercise 6: Telling a favourite recipe

Target group: Language learners, advanced
Objectives: Explain the recipe in the target language.
Use learned vocabulary and learn new words
Learn to make associations
Learn to ‘flavour’ their language with emotions and senses
Material: Black board
Shape: Sitting in pairs
Duration: 30 - 40 minutes
Content and procedure:
1. 10 minutes: The storyteller describes his/her favourite recipe, using all of the senses (taste, sight, sound, smell, touch). The recipe should be told so that the listeners would like to prepare or eat it at once.
2. 5 minutes: The storyteller asks the learners to explain their favourite recipe to their partner, helping by asking additional questions: Which sounds do we hear when preparing the recipe? How do the ingredients feel on your tongue, in your mouth, between your fingers? How does it feel to cut the ingredient, to stir the pot? What does the meal look like? What colours do you see? How does it smell? How does it taste? The questions could be written down or projected on the board.
3. 15 minutes: The learners share their favourite recipe with a partner. They can move to another partner and tell it again. The trainer walks around and helps out when necessary. If the teacher wants to correct mistakes on form, it should be clear to the learners what form they should focus on.
4. 10 minutes: When the learners have heard different recipes, they form larger groups and tell the group what recipe triggered their interest most? What would they like to prepare or eat?

Exercise 7: Reduce the story
Target group: Language learners, advanced
Objectives: Separate the essential parts from additional parts
Reflect on the real heart of the story. What is this story about?
Unravel the bones of the story
Material: Paper and pen
Shape: Sit in pairs
Duration: 25 minutes

Content and procedure:
The trainer tells a story and then asks the learners to reduce the story they just heard in:

- 7 sentences (10 minutes)
- 3 sentences (5 minutes)
- 1 sentence (1 minute)

The learners share this last sentence with the group.

Exercise 8: Draft a lookout (APB) for one of the characters (or even animals)
Target group: Advanced language learners
Objectives: Combining imagination and everyday life
Applying own vocabulary
Describe a person
Material: A card with additional questions (see content and procedure)
Shape: Learners work in pairs firstly, then in a semi-circle telling in front of the group
Duration: 15 minutes

Content and procedure:
10 minutes: Learners prepare the exercise. In pairs they first choose the person that has gone missing. The following questions could be written on a card to help them when preparing:

- Where was the person last seen?
- What was she/he wearing when she/he disappeared?
- How was her/his mood at that time?
- What does the person look like?
- What are the last facts we know about the person? What was he/she doing?
- Has anyone noticed something about the person? Do you have more details?
- Is there a message for radio or television?
- Which standard phrases do you use when addressing an audience on radio or TV?

5 minutes: The two learners bring their story in front of the group.

Comment: This exercise can be part of a whole set of storytelling exercises, where every pair completes different exercises. Afterwards, each pair shares their storytelling task with the group. If it is a large group, the trainer can ask two groups to draft an APB, but for different people.

“Given the centrality of narrative in human experience, we can begin to appreciate the power of stories in teaching and learning. We can also see that the application of a narrative perspective to education involves much more than storytelling in the classroom.” (M. Rossiter, 2002)
**Exercise 9: Gossip about one of the characters of the story.**

**Target group:** Advanced language learners (from A2+)

**Objectives:**
- Combining imagination and everyday life
- Being able to turn an objective event in a subjective story
- Use specific vocabulary to distinguish between positive or negative words
- Telling skills

**Material:** A card with additional questions (see Content and procedure)

**Shape:** Learners work in pairs firstly, then in a semi-circle telling in front of the group

**Duration:** 15 minutes

**Content and procedure:**
10 minutes: Learners prepare the exercise. In pairs they first choose the character they will gossip about. The following questions could be written on a card to help them when preparing:

- Who are you? Who do you gossip to?
- What is it you can’t believe?
- What did you see, and when, and where?
- Why do you disapprove of this behaviour?
- Why do you gossip? What advantage does it give you?

5 minutes: The two learners bring their story in front of the group.

**Exercise 10: Tell the story from another point of view**

**Target group:** Advanced language learners

**Objectives:**
- Imagination; re-telling the story adapting it a little and adding new elements

**Material:** None

**Shape:** Sitting in pairs

**Duration:** 10 minutes

**Content and procedure:**
10 minutes: The storyteller gives an example of alternative viewpoint from another character of the story. It could be a person, but also an animal or even an object, or an element of nature such as a river, a tree... The learners prepare their story.

10 minutes: The learners share their story with the group.

**Exercise 11: Name 5 actions, 3 descriptions, 3 objects, 3 feelings**

**Target group:** Language learners from A2+

**Objectives:**
- Define actions, objects, feelings and take descriptions from the story

**Material:** Pen and paper

**Shape:** In pairs

**Duration:** 10 minutes

**Content and procedure:**
7 minutes: The storyteller asks learners to write down 5 actions, 3 descriptions, 3 objects and 3 feelings from the story they have just heard. The storyteller can give an example to clarify the difference between them.

3 minutes: The learners bring their presentation for the group.

**Exercise 12: Turn the story into a news item**

**Target group:** Language learners

**Objectives:**
- Combine daily reality with imagination

**Material:** None

**Shape:** In pairs

**Duration:** 10 minutes

**Content and procedure:**
10 minutes: The storyteller helps the learners to find some standard phrases they need in order to prepare a news item for the radio and TV depending on their preferred media. The learners prepare their story.

10 minutes: The learners share their story with the group.

**Exercise 13: Mood Mapping**

**Target group:** Beginners to advanced

**Objectives:**
- Discover the structure and progression of a particular story

**Material:** Paper and colour pencils or pastels

**Shape:** On the floor or on tables

**Duration:** 10 - 15 minutes

**Content and procedure:**
This exercise works well once students have singled out one particular story to work on in depth. Real life story or fairy tale,
it does not matter. Have people sit by themselves with paper and coloured pens.

Instructions: Draw the moods and emotions that appear in your story, in an abstract way (not drawing figures). From the beginning to the end, when is your story happy, sad, full of fear, loneliness etc. Then sit in pairs and share: describe your painting, the emotions that the story evokes for you. Later, put all the paintings in the middle and have students walk around and see them all. Finish with a plenary session in a circle sharing the learners’ observations.

**Exercise 14: My family roots**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target group:</th>
<th>Beginners, native speaker or language learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective:</td>
<td>Discover how unique we are and on the other hand how many common features we have.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material:</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape:</td>
<td>In pairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration:</td>
<td>40 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Content and procedure:**
In the old days, grandfather/mother used to tell about the old days. Also storytellers keep track of the nation’s history. When you have left your country of origin, you have also partly left your roots. In this exercise we compile a genealogy and honour the roots and your family. Prepare in pairs and tell us who you are: ‘I am the daughter of, the granddaughter of, sister of, best friend of… AND…’ With AND you invite the other person. You stimulate each other to remember; you can even improvise a genealogy

**Example:**
I am the daughter of a father who was small in stature, but a leading figure and who was always listened to respectfully in a group, a great personality. And...I am the daughter of a mother who was a teacher, but who had to finish her job when she got married, being married you were not able to teach anymore. And...I am the granddaughter of a woman who ran a shop and a café in times of war to survive. I am the granddaughter of a hardworking, humble farmer, who I never knew, I only have a black and white picture. And...

**Exercise 15: “Saperlipopette”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target group:</th>
<th>Migrant adults, language learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objectives:</td>
<td>Create sentences from simple words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Build a story as a group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material:</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape:</td>
<td>Facilitate discussion and interaction as the participants stand in a circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration:</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Content and procedure:**
In this activity, the participants stand in a circle and each person says a letter of the alphabet, going in alphabetical order. For the second round, the participants replace their letter with a word that begins with the same letter (ex. “C” becomes “cat”). Any unknown words are explained. For the third round of the activity, each participant builds a sentence around the word they have chosen. Finally, for the fourth round, the participants create a story as a group, with each person adding a different sentence that includes their word and that is connected to the previous sentence by the markers “and,” “but,” “so”, “then”, etc.

**Exercise 16: “Vire-langue”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target group:</th>
<th>Language learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objectives:</td>
<td>Have fun whilst learning new words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Articulation and pronunciation of sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material:</td>
<td>Different tongue twisters written on a piece of paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape:</td>
<td>Chairs in pairs, opposite each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration:</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Content and procedure:**
Working in pairs, the participants practice pronouncing tongue twisters. Afterwards, those who want to are invited to recite their tongue twister in front of the group. Finally, with the help of the storyteller and trainers, the participants work on the meaning of the words and sentences.

“Man is always a storyteller, he lives surrounded by his own stories as well as those of others. Through them he sees everything that happens and he tries to live his life as if he were telling it.”
(Sartre, La Nausée)
**Exercise 17: Object Exercise**

Target group: Migrant adults  
Objectives: Stimulation of the emotional memory and promotion of speaking by encouraging imagination  
Material: Different small objects with a variety of shapes and textures, a bag to place all objects in  
Shape: Chairs placed in a semi-circle with one chair in the front facing the semi-circle  
Duration: 30 minutes  

**Content and procedure:**  
Participants sit in a semicircle facing the storyteller. One by one, a volunteer is chosen to sit in a chair in front of the other participants. The volunteer places her/his hands behind her/his back so that the storyteller can give her/him a small object, which neither she/he nor the other participants can see. Based on touch alone, the volunteer must tell the story of a memory that the object evokes and the other participants guess what the object is.

For the following session of the course, the participants are invited to bring their own object and to tell a story about it.

**Exercise 18: ‘There’s a street in Rome’**

Target group: Beginners to advanced  
Objectives: Promotes visual memory and listening skills  
Material: None  
Shape: Sitting in a circle  
Duration: 10 minutes  

**Content and procedure:**  
This is similar to the game ‘I go on holiday and in my bag I put...’ where one has to remember all the items that were said, but in this case, it is a street scene, which makes it much more interesting. As a group, we are describing a photograph of a street in Rome, each person starts by saying ‘there is a street in Rome’ and lists all of the cars, trees, buildings and people that others have mentioned, finishing with the new element they bring to the picture.

**Example:**  
‘There’s a street in Rome, and on it there is...’  
Person 1: a row of big trees on the left side pavement  
Person 2: big trees on the pavement on the left and there’s a cat sitting in the first tree  
Person 3: a row of big trees on the left, a cat sitting in the first tree and there’s a man crossing the road in the foreground, he’s carrying a ladder and he’s looking up at the cat...

Depending on group size, you can go round the circle one or three times, accumulating up to 20 elements in the picture. You do not need to repeat elements in the order in which they were said in the circle, so you could start with the man and the ladder....

**Exercise 19: The First Time**

Target group: Migrant language learners  
Objectives: Work on direct and indirect speech  
Material: None  
Shape: Sitting in chairs in a circle allowing learners to hear and see each other  
Duration: 20 minutes  

**Content and procedure:**  
This activity starts with a short story from the storyteller about her/his first time doing something (for example visiting a neighbourhood pool). The participants are then split into pairs and take turns sharing stories of different firsts. Then, in circle, participants are invited to share the story told by their partner with the group.

**Exercise 20: Which preposition do we use?**

Target group: Language learners  
Objectives: Focus on formal aspect of language and eliminating mistakes  
Material: Own gap: Fill exercise with sentences from the story.  
Shape: Working individually or in pairs  
Duration: 5 – 10 minutes  

**Content and procedure:**  
In a language class, one could do this kind of technical exercise with a focus on form, so that the learners already have this focus in mind while speaking. It’s merely a question of repetition. When learners hear the sentences as they listen to the story and the trainer focuses on them, they already have had a first
impression. In the written exercise following the story learners have to fill in the sentences they’ve already heard. May be they know them only partially but they will be challenged to retrieve the exact sentences in their memory.

**Exercise 21: Comprehension exercise**

Target group: Language learners from Level A2 +  
Objectives: Learning new vocabulary  
Material: Pictograms, pictures and word cards  
Shape: Working in pairs  
Duration: 5 minutes

**Content and procedure:**
The storyteller previously told a story about a fishmonger and the love of his life. The story is set in the Middle Ages. Multiple Choice exercise with the professions and species of fish that appear in the story, with a pictogram or picture, and a card with the name of the fish or profession written on it. Any comprehension exercise with pictures, pictograms and cards can be used to rehearse the vocabulary and train word combinations.

**Workshop**

In adult learning, the workshop is the setting where the specific goals of the course and storytelling methods come alive. In the exercises below storytelling is used to achieve the objectives of the training. Grammar structures, word clusters, tenses as well as creativity and imagination all come together.

**Exercise 1: A treasure from my childhood**

Target group: Beginners, native speaker or language learners up from level A2  
Objectives: Creating room for creative thinking and concentration  
Introduction to the world of fairy tales and storytelling  
Listening to standard language  
Practicing the understanding of complex sentences and following the path of a short story  
Revealing something personal  
Sharing a memory and getting to know each other  
Material: The Brothers Grimm story The Golden Key as an input  
Shape: Circle of chairs without tables, partly a group exercise  
Duration: 20 - 30 minutes

**Content and procedure:**
1. The moderator tells the fairy tale of the golden key. The open end “and now we have to wait until the boy has opened the lid to see what is inside the box” is being discussed in the group. The participants collect suggestions and ideas of what could be inside the box.
2. The moderator asks the participants to remind themselves of the time when they were a child themselves. Imagining that you have had a treasure chest when you where an 8 year old child. What was or would have been inside? Was there a favourite toy, a sweet, a beautiful stone or a secret letter?
3. The participants form pairs and tell each other what is hidden in the treasure chest of their childhood. The described treasure can correspond to a true memory or may be an imagined treasure as well. Important is, however, the child’s perspective.
4. Back in plenary the fairy tale or just the end of the fairy tale is being told again. Each participant is taking a turn at giving an insight into his/her treasure, this time by-miming the object. That way the participants do not need to speak yet in front of the group and it prevents duplication of step 3.

**Exercise 2: How did you get here?**

Target group: Beginners, good to start with a new group, native speakers, or level A2 +  
Objectives: Monologues  
Practicing past perfect tense  
Revealing something of yourself  
Bringing imagination to everyday life  
Shape: Circle of chairs, without tables followed by a group exercise  
Duration: 10 minutes

**Content and procedure:**
The participants are asked to form pairs. They begin by telling their partner how they arrived here today. In the main, the majority of the story should be true with one incident a lie - a product of their imagination.
The participants tell in plenary how their partner has got here today.

Plenary exercise: participants must identify the lie in the story

**Exercise 3: Everyday chain**

| Target group: | Beginners, native speakers, or level A2 + |
| Objectives: | Monologues |
| | Practicing past perfect tense |
| | Combining imagination and everyday life |
| | Applying own vocabulary |
| | Experiencing collective creativity |

| Material: | Cards with an everyday place written on it |
| Shape: | Circle of chairs without tables, partly a group exercise |
| Duration: | 20 - 40 minutes |

**Content and procedure:**

1. The participants form small groups of 3 - 5 participants depending on group size. Each group receives a card with an everyday place written on it (e.g. swimming pool, coffee shop, train station, hairdressing salon, etc.). As preparation they compile how it smells, sounds, looks like, and which feelings and tactile impressions they associate with that place. To the rest of the group the place is not revealed, they have to guess based on the description.

2. The cards are collected again by the moderator and spread in a row visible for all.

3. Exposition (PLACE 1) // 1. encounter (PLACE 2) // 2. encounter (PLACE 3) // 3. encounter (PLACE 4) // 4. encounter and the end (PLACE 5). Depending on how many places have been described, it might be better to build two different, shorter chain stories.

4. In new small groups or all together in plenary, a new chain story is being created. It starts in the morning and ends at night – on which protagonist do we agree, whom does he/she meet in the mentioned places, what does he/she experience there – everyday or fantastic features are allowed!

5. Advanced participants should be given the possibility to develop their own variations of this everyday story. It is being told either in pairs or alone in front of the group.

**Exercise 4: Everyday story**

| Target group: | Beginners, native speakers, at least level A2 + |
| Objectives: | Monologues |
| | Using modal verbs |
| | Combining imagination and everyday life |
| | Applying own vocabulary |
| | Experiencing collective creativity |

| Material: | Cards (2 colours) and pencils |
| Shape: | Circle of chairs, without tables, partly a group exercise |
| Duration: | 15 - 30 minutes |

**Content and procedure:**

1. The participants are provided with two cards (one of each colour) - on the first card they shall write a person or an animal, as well as something that it is good at. On the second card the participants write a person/an animal, as well as something that it likes a lot or does not like at all (e.g. grandpa is good at telling stories / the dog does not like cries of children)

2. The cards are being collected and small groups are formed of 3 - 5 participants depending on group size. Each group receives two cards of each colour. Now they shall develop a joint story. One card is raised to the protagonist, the other persons/animals and their skills or needs shall be implemented in the course of the story.

3. Back in plenary, the cards not yet used are revealed one after the other. In the circle a story is being developed spontaneously, in which the persons/animals appear which have been noted on the cards. This exercise is suited for advanced participants or must be strongly guided by the moderator.

**Exercise 5: Tell me about telling!**

| Target group: | Native speakers, at least level A2 + |
| Objectives: | Monologues |
| | Sharing memories |
| | Getting to know other cultures |
| | Tying in with own experiences through storytelling |
| | Thinking about the culture of storytelling |

| Shape: | Circle of chairs without tables, partly a group exercise |
| Duration: | 15 - 30 minutes |
Content and procedure:
1. The moderator asks the participants to recall their childhood. A place where, as a child, they could listen to adults telling or speaking. Were there adults who were telling each other’s stories? Were there stories or narratives that were directed to you as a child? Who was telling? How did his or her voice sound?
2. Participants are asked to form small circles of 4 – 7 people, and move close together. Who likes to share one of his/her memories? On which occasion were stories told? What were the contents of the stories or narrations?
3. In a small circle, the conversation can be continued: Why do you think the adults told the children stories? What is the significance of storytelling in different cultures? What value do you yourself place on storytelling?

Exercise 6: The house you grew up in

Target group: Beginners, native speakers or language learners
Objectives: Creating room for creative thinking and concentration
Sharing a memory and getting to know each other
Material: None
Shape: Chairs in pairs, opposite each other
Duration: 20 - 30 minutes

Content and procedure:
Exercise in pairs: Think about the house you grew up in. Search your memories and think about a special event during your youth in that house. Then your partner opposite you asks questions to make the inner images appear more clearly. Go to the place you liked best. A door opens and a story comes out. Eyes closed. The partner helps you when you are telling and trying to make the image clear. What did you see, hear, feel, smell? What was beautiful, what moved you? Afterwards share only the story in the group (no guided tour in the house).

Help/assistance: Pick one place. If this is easier, you can close your eyes while trying to remember it. Was it a house in a town or in a village, a big house with many rooms or just a small house? In which period in your life did you live in this house? When was it? Was there a garden? Was there a fence? What was the facade like? What did the front door look like? What was the colour of the house? Do you also see specific details? Go inside the house now, walk through the door (or walk round the back like the way you used to). Look what the house is like and see what you remember of it. Was there a corridor? A small hall? What rooms were in the house? Take a look in the kitchen: do you still know the way it was arranged? In your thoughts you walk through the house and try to pick up the atmosphere, the scents, the noises, the images. Also pay attention to interesting details in the house. Perhaps you don’t remember exactly the way it was, but you might still remember the front doorknob, the string in the letterbox to open up the door…are there also people in your favourite place?

Exercise 7: Act out a market scene

Target group: Advanced language learners
Objectives: Master a typical dialogue about selling and buying on the market
Material: None
Shape: Working in pairs
Duration: 15 minutes

Content and procedure:
1. Instruction (7 min.): Divide learners in pairs. Tell them to remember the different market scenes they heard in the story. Tell them to choose one scene and to act it out. The dialogue should be no longer than 3 minutes. They decide who will be customer and who will be vendor. If learners state they have no inspiration, you can give them a card with a market situation and an example of a dialogue.
2. Acting (8 min.): Let the learners act it out and rehearse. Go round and give help where necessary. Encourage them to make the situation longer, more complex. Ask volunteers to act out their situation in front of the class. If it is a class of small size, you might ask all pairs to act out for the others.

Exercise 8: Sell an object from the story

Target group: Advanced language learners
Objectives: Describe an object in detail in an attractive and clear way
Using modal verbs
Combining imagination and everyday life
Applying own vocabulary
Material: Cards describing what to do with additional questions
Shape: Working in pairs and then in a semi-circle with the one person telling
Duration: 15 minutes

Content and procedure:
1. 10 minutes: Learners prepare the exercise. In pairs they first choose an object, or they can get a card with the object written on it. The following questions help them when preparing:
   • What does the object look like?
   • What do you use it for, what can you do with it? How do you do it?
   • What material is it made of?
   • How old is it?
   • From which country does it come?
   • Is it a rare or a common object?
   • What does it cost?
   • Learners then improvise on how to sell it, to make it attractive… as if they were on a market.
2. 5 minutes: One of the selected pairs brings their object in front of the group and describes it.

Remark: this exercise can be part of a whole set of storytelling exercises, where every pair does another exercise. Afterwards, each pair shares their storytelling task with the group.

Exercise 9: The story of my name

Target group: Beginners, native speaker or language learners
Objective: Find out that each name has a story that tells something about the person
Material: Words: vocabulary about names to be taught and assimilated
Shape: Chairs in pairs, opposite each other
Duration: 20 - 30 minutes

Content and procedure:
Names are important. In many countries people know the sense of their name and this sense is important as a wish for the child’s future for instance. Anyway, nobody is indifferent to his/her name. In some tribes, a name is so important that it is even kept a secret. Possible questions:
• After whom are you named? (a family member, a celebrity, a character in a religious or literary work?)
• Do you know why you are called that way?
• Does your name have a special meaning?
• Do you have a nickname, a pet name (sobriquet)?
• Did you ever change your name? Would you like to have another name?
• How do you like your name?

Example of a story:
As a baby I was very, very ill. My parents thought I would die. Then they called the rabbi. The rabbi pronounced my name dead, so the angel of death would not find a child carrying that name to take away. I got better and I got a new name.

Exercise 10: The story journey with fire

Target group: Beginners, native speaker or language learners
Objectives: Tell a story by means of images
Learn that a story often starts by where, who, what and when (WWWW).
Material: Candle
Shape: Sitting in a circle, candle in the middle. Work individually first, then in pairs and finally in a group
Duration: 60 minutes, depending on group size

Content and procedure:
1. First storytelling experience by means of imagination. How does our imagination work? We think in images and not in words.
2. How? Candle in the middle, everyone looks at the candle. Close your eyes and still try to see the candle. The candle is like a flame our ancestors looked at while sitting around the fire and telling stories. The flame becomes a guide to imagination, search for a memory of fire. Go back in your life and remember a time in which something happened with fire. See what happened then. Your mind is creating a sort of film, as a camera in your head, you watch this film through images, not through words. Film the story and put it into your memory.
3. Then tell the story to your partner, the way you tell it is not important yet. You see your partner and the image in your mind.
4. Start with: where, who, what and when? Afterwards share the story with the group.
**Exercise 11: Postcard Exercise**

Target group: Language learners, intermediate language level  
Objectives: Create a story as a group using disconnected images (the postcards) and develop the imagination and allow participants to practice oral expression.  
Material: A variety of postcards, at least one per participant  
Shape: Working in groups in different corners of the room.  
Duration: 45 minutes  

**Content and procedure:**  
1. The storyteller introduces the exercise by telling a story based on 3-4 postcards.  
2. Participants are split into small groups and each group member is given a postcard. Using all of the postcards, each group has to work together to create a story and then share it with the other groups.  
3. Alternatively, one could work with movie posters and ask the participants to describe the imagined plot of a movie, using a poster advertising the movie to spark their imagination. They then share their impression of the imagined movie and tell the other members of the group why they should (or shouldn't) see the movie.

**Exercise 12: Story about a scar (Betty Rosen 1988)**

Target group: Mixed background adult, beginners  
Objectives: Telling a personal story  
Material: Chairs  
Shape: Working in pairs, seated  
Duration: 10 minutes  

**Content and procedure:**  
This is a very easy way to start telling personal stories. Everybody can tell a story about this. The group goes into pairs and tells a story about how they got a scar on their body. One starts telling about their scar and the other partner tells his or her story when the first one has finished. Everybody has a scar on their body. Often these are perfect stories, they have what it takes – a clear and distinct structure, they are dramatic and recognizable.

**Exercise 13: An unusual morning (Heidi Dahlsveen/Jan Blake)**

Target group: Mixed background adult, some experience  
Objectives: Use of dramaturgy  
Material: Chairs  
Shape: At the beginning, participants are working alone, then in pairs and finally in a group in a circle.  
Duration: 20 minutes  

**Content and procedure:**  
1. The participants are asked to make up a story about a morning. As a “leader” you inform that when we tell the stories we often tell about what is unusual, perhaps we stumble when we walk or we meet someone we have not seen in a long time. We will use this in the exercise. Here you will create a story based on a morning, because it is in the morning we have many routines. We do things in a certain order without even realising it. You should therefore create a story about a morning, but suddenly something happens unexpectedly, perhaps the toothpaste is a snake, maybe your cat starts talking to you, etc. To end the story, go back to the regular morning. The participants will have three minutes to individually create a story about an unusual morning.  
2. The participants pair up and tell each story.  
3. Everyone sits in a circle and the participants are encouraged to recommend a partner to tell his or her story.

**Exercise 14: Memory Map**

Target group: Mixed background adult, some experience  
Objectives: Finding stories in your own background  
Material: Chairs, paper and pens  
Shape: Working alone, then participants sit in pairs to complete the exercise  
Duration: 30 minutes  

**Content and procedure:**  
1. On a sheet, draw a circle in the middle of the page, and in this circle write the first thing you think about when you remember your childhood. It might be a place, an animal, a family member, a friend or the like. This word provides a number of associations that you put in circles around and with lines drawn from the middle word. The new words
give new associations. Continue until the entire sheet is covered with associations. Each circle is a seed of a story.

2. Working in pairs, tell each other a story starting with the word in the centre of your page. Follow a line, do not tell everything on the sheet, only one way.

Exercise 15: From autobiographical to Fairy Tale (Iwan Kuchka)

Target group: Beginners to advanced
Objectives: Listening skills and re-telling in creative way
Material: None
Shape: Working in trios
Duration: 10 - 15 minutes

Content and procedure:
• “The way from real life to fairy tale goes through three pairs of lips and three pairs of ears” (Irish saying)
• Person A tells person B an episode from their life (in the first person)
• Person B tells person C this same episode (in the third person)
• Person C tells person A the story they’ve heard, but changing it into a fairy tale.

Exercise 16: Improvised stories

Target group: Beginners to advanced
Objectives: Acquiring confidence to make things up
Material: None
Shape: In plenary circle or small groups
Duration: 10 minutes

Content and procedure:
Option 1: “Fortunately/Unfortunately” - Tell a story in a circle, each person speaking for 1 to 2 minutes and finishing with either ‘fortunately’ or ‘unfortunately’ as they pass the word to their neighbour.

Option 2: “Interruptor” - Demonstrate this in plenary circle first, before breaking up into pairs. Start an improvised story. Somebody shouts out a random and unrelated word and you as the storyteller have to integrate this word into your story (as quickly as possible). Then, and only then, somebody else can say another word that you have to weave in as well. Keep going with your story until everybody has thrown in a word, then say ‘no more words’ and wrap up the story. Have students do this in pairs.

Example:
• A: … and the prince went into the forest to look for the young girl
• B: New choice!
• A: …and the prince went up the highest mountain from where to oversee the whole kingdom and from there see his love…
• B: New choice!
• A: …and the prince decided to sit down on the market place and not move until he would have heard news from her… [continue story]

Exercise 17: Work up a story

Target group: Adult learners. If there are illiterate participants, the leader must convey the story to them orally
Objectives: Rehearse a story and make it your own
Material: A number of traditional stories (short text, half an A4) on paper. You must have some experience of storytelling to lead this exercise
Shape: Free space, no tables
Duration: 1 - 3 hours
Content and procedure:
1. Each learner receives a short traditional story in text. Everyone reads it in silence once or twice, and then puts the paper aside.
2. In pairs, participants tell their stories immediately to each other. They are usually surprised that it was so easy to learn the story sufficiently to retell it so quickly.
3. Participants may look one more time at their text, and then tell the story a second time for a new listener (new pairs). This time, they incorporate into the story something from their own background or family - a person or place, or both. Now they have begun to make the story their own.
4. The participants are ready to start rehearsing it in different ways. They change partners and get a new listener for each new exercise. The storyteller times the activity and lets the participants tell for only four minutes each. During that time, the listener interrupts the narrator at any point and gives the narrator an instruction – see 5
5. The listener may interrupt to ask: “what can you see in that place? What does it look like?”, or “what can you smell there?” and other questions associated with the sensory knowledge of the story. The narrator then freezes the narrative to look around inside it and find the answers.
6. After a short time the listener says “continue” and the narrator resumes the narrative. If the narrator manages to finish the story within the four minutes he/she immediately starts it again from the beginning so that he/she uses all the time. After four minutes the pair switches roles.
7. You can vary this exercise a great deal. One should give only one questioning task to the pairs in each round, otherwise it becomes too complicated.

Exercise 18: Storytelling Mingle

Target group: Adult learners
Objectives: Boosts the flow of life stories by inspiring each other.
Awakens the urge to tell and shows how many stories you have in your own life.
Strengthens group cohesion
Material: Paper, pencils, tape
Shape: Free space, no tables
Duration: 30 - 60 minutes

Content and procedure:
1. The storyteller tells an unassuming anecdote from his/her own life, as an example.
2. All participants get a paper and a piece of tape. Everyone divides their own paper into four sections. On each one, they write a title referring to an event in their own life. No one should be forced to find a story for all four, but conversely if someone has more than four stories they may have more pieces of paper for all the titles.
3. Participants tape the titles to their chest. Then they start mingling. Everyone moves slowly around the room. They greet each other in pairs, read each other’s titles, select one and ask to hear the story. When both have told their stories, they thank each other, without commenting on the story and find new partners.
4. If someone is asked to tell the same story too often, they can put their hand over that one when a new partner is browsing their titles.

Exercise 19: Visualisation

Target group: Adult learners
Objectives: Deeper knowledge of telling of the story
Listening skills
Develop the imagination.
Material: None
Shape: Chairs in a circle, no tables
Duration: 30 minutes

Content and procedure:
1. The group sits in a circle. Everyone has their own separate story that they work with. The storyteller chooses a character from a story in his repertoire and describes the character for the group. He begins with the words: “I see…”
2. The character is described as vividly as possible, but only through what we can perceive with our senses, not through explanations or events. Use their height, hair colour, voice, smell, clothes, the way they move, etc. The task is to get the group to see the character in their mind as clearly as
possible. The events in the story should not be brought into the exercise.

3. Continue around the circle. You can repeat the exercise with a place, or an object, etc...all the elements of each person’s story.

4. In another version of this exercise, instead of descriptions, each person in turn makes a sound, a gesture, or says a line of dialogue that belongs to their story.

**Performance**

The performance aspect of storytelling can provide learners with an opportunity to tell their own stories to each other and listen to the stories of others. A performance for an audience can be intimidating for some learners and is not an essential requirement in the process. Therefore it is often useful to divide learners into pairs or trios as this can be less daunting. A performance is a fulfilling way to complete a storytelling workshop but is often optional as practical reasons may be an obstacle.

**Exercise 1: Storytelling walk through town**

**Target group:** Language learners from level B1 +

**Objectives:** Using own memories to build a new story
Telling a story in front of the group at a place in the city (out of the safe surrounding of their learning environment)

**Material:** Cards in three different colours. This exercise can only be done with a story that takes place in the city where the learners are.

**Shape:** Initially working in a circle; then learners spread over the classroom for preparation

**Duration:** 55 minutes preparation with a minimum of 90 minutes for a story walk

**Content and procedure:**

1. 25 minutes: Instruction and first reflection. The storyteller has numbered cards in 3 colours (e.g. green 1, yellow 1, red 1). He/she explains the instructions written on the cards. The numbers on the cards correspond, so the memory should correspond with the episode in the story and with the place. In our story, a memory about fish should correspond with the part in the story about the fish market and will be told on the very spot where the fish market was held in previous time.

2. 10 minutes: On the first card there are questions that recall some memories. The memories should have some link with the episode from the story that the learner is going to tell and with the place in the city where the learner will tell his part of the story. After the instruction about the cards the storyteller distributes the remembrance cards (just one colour, for example green). The learners get some time to think about their memories.

3. 10 minutes: The second card states the episode from the story that the learner will tell. The storyteller explains about this card and distributes these “episode cards” (1 colour, for example blue) and gives the learners some time to remember the part and how they will tell it.

4. 5 minutes: the third card (in yet another colour) states the place where the learner will tell his part of the story. The storyteller asks whether they know this place in the city.

5. 15 minutes: individual preparation by learners. The storyteller/trainer circulates and gives help when needed. The storyteller points out that every story has the following elements: who, what, where, when, how, why?

6. 15 minutes: the learners sit in pairs and tell each other the story they have built.

7. 90 minutes: an actual walk. The storyteller takes the learners through the city. At the appointed places, determined beforehand by the storyteller, the learners tell their part of the story to the group (and to walkers-by). The story does not have to be told chronologically, it is in the order of the place that will determine which part of the story will be told.
**Good practices of storytelling workshops involving teacher trainers**

**Storytelling Workshop for Reception Class**

**Trainers - France**

*Background*

**Target group:**
This workshop, led by French storyteller Caroline Sire, was addressed to trainers working with recently arrived migrants.

**Context:**
The course was offered as part of a professional education series, French as a foreign language (FLE) with trainers working within the national educational system (l’Éducation nationale) in France. The training was held over 4 days. The good practice took place during the last day of the workshop. There were eighteen participants present.

**Objectives:**
Promoting storytelling as a tool in language learning and integration of recently arrived migrant learners
Providing reception class trainers with storytelling tools that they can use with their learners

**Detailed description**

**Activities:**
The storyteller led the participants in a few warm-up games and physical exercises to encourage physical and mental relaxation. Next, participants engaged in voice exercises. Several storytelling activities followed. The final activity of the day served as the example of the good practice. During this activity, the storyteller invited two participants to tell a personal story.

**Methodology:**
After the initial telling of their stories, the two participants were encouraged to re-tell their stories in a very unique way. Instead of telling the story from their own point of view, they were to choose a different character in the story and tell the story from his/her perspective, using the first person. The two participants were also told to alternate when telling their stories. When the storyteller gave the signal, one person would stop the story and the other person would begin to tell his/her story. This was done throughout the telling of the two stories, particularly at key moments in the stories.

**Partners involved:**
This project involved Caroline Sire, a local French storyteller and the CASNAV, the hub of the Regional Educational Authority (académie) of the Department of Créteil which focuses on the education of recently arrived migrant and itinerant learners.

**Issues, related to the story:**
One of the biggest obstacles of the course seemed to be making the participants feel comfortable enough to share their stories. This obstacle was overcome through the building of trust over several days and through warming-up activities.

**Involvement of storytellers:**
This workshop was led by one storyteller.

**Type of the story:**
The participants shared personal stories, fairy tales, folk tales and sometimes stories that were a combination of the three.

**Techniques applied / used:**
Building trust through interactive icebreakers was an integral step in preparing the participants to share their own stories at the end of the final day of the training.

**Timescale:**
The training took place over 4 days (24 hours total).

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35 In France, reception classes (“classes d’accueil”) serve learners who have recently arrived in France and who need to improve their French language skills. Such classes may also include learners from French-speaking countries (particularly in sub-Saharan Africa) who did not have access to education in their countries of origin.
**Special attention to the role of storytelling**

How the story contributes to achieving the goals of the training: The main goal of the course was to promote storytelling as a tool in the language learning and integration of migrant learners. This particular activity is very much in line with that goal because it emphasised communication and confidence building, both of which are key goals in a reception class. As the participants alternated in telling their stories, the emotions expressed in the two stories began to overlap. The two participants engaged in an unconscious mimicry of emotions that allowed them to be more aware of each other and more comfortable when telling their stories. This effect can easily transfer to a language learning context.

**How telling the story facilitates learning so that it is not only fun for the participants:**
While this workshop was aimed at French trainers and not learners, it served an important role in facilitating learning. Not only did the trainers learn different storytelling techniques that could be used in public speaking and confidence building contexts, they also learned more about how storytelling can be used as a pedagogical tool. The two participants who volunteered to share their stories in the good practice activity relied on tools they had developed throughout the course of the workshop.

**Evaluation**

**Influence (impact) on learners:**
The participants seemed to greatly enjoy the workshop. Several took the time to prepare stories to share in advance, drawing on personal experiences, fairy tales and other sources. They seemed eager to use some of the techniques and ideas from the workshop with their own learners.

**Strengths:**
The activities involved in this training provide a non-traditional approach to teaching French as a foreign language and to facilitating the integration process of migrant learners. As it emphasises the use of games and interactive activities, this teaching style may particularly resonate with learners who favour a more dynamic approach. Furthermore, because it is centred on storytelling techniques, it gives learners the opportunity to communicate orally in a fun, non-threatening context.

**Weaknesses:**
Because this particular workshop was held with trainers, the emphasis was put on storytelling techniques rather than language learning. It would have been nice to have had a segment at the end of the course to help the trainers think about how they would integrate storytelling into their classes in the future. While time constraints made this impossible, the storyteller was sure to include numerous activities and exercises that could be adapted to a language learning context. She also gave suggestions on how to integrate storytelling into language learning curricula.

**Recommended books and resources for further information**

**Personal data about the presenter of the good practice**
Name: Caroline Sire
Email: caroline.sire@gmail.com

“Human beings share stories to remind each other of who they are and how they should behave. When we hear stories based on these patterns, we feel more like were remembering something forgotten than learning something new.” (Jonah Sachs)
Horizon language training
United Kingdom

**Background**

**Target group/Needs/Context:**
Referred to by Mario Rinvolucri as ‘the language teacher’s oldest technique’ 36, storytelling is a remarkably versatile component of the teacher’s toolkit, useful for developing everything from pronunciation of individual sounds to presentation skills and appropriate for classes of adult learners of business English.

Despite this, there is very little training available to language teachers either in the skills needed to become a good storyteller, or in how to use storytelling as an organising principle in class. Storytelling in Language Teaching is a one-week intensive teacher development course which explores both of these issues. It is for practising language teachers working in the primary, secondary or adult sector and provides a wealth of ideas for helping the participants’ own learners to tell stories. Along the way, the teachers build up a bank of stories that can be used for teaching a range of different areas, and work on their own individual story which they perform at the end of the week.

**Objectives/aims:**
It consists of 25 hours of practical workshops and has three main objectives: firstly, to unfold a rationale for incorporating a healthy amount of storytelling based activities into a programme of language study, secondly to develop the skills and the confidence of the participants in telling stories in the learning environment, and thirdly to explore a range of motivating and innovative storytelling activities which can be used in language teaching.

**Detailed description**

**Activities & Methodology:**
Monday
- Name games and ice-breakers - simple storytelling activities for learning names and finding out about each other.

- Why stories? - What role can stories and storytelling play in the development of a second language? How has storytelling been used in this way?

- The story as live listening material: discussion about the advantages of live listening over pre-recorded listening material. Demonstration of simple stories which can be used as live listening practice.

Tuesday
- Before telling activities: a range of pre-story tasks which can be used to create interest and/or pre-teach necessary language.

- Reading stories aloud - discussion about the pros and cons of telling versus reading stories. Stories which lend themselves to being read (e.g. rhyming stories)

- Performing Stories: teachers are given their own story to tell at the end of the week.

- Getting physical - how to make meanings transparent through incorporating mime, gesture and physical action into storytelling activities.

- Readers’ theatre - how to use reader’s theatre scripts effectively

Wednesday
- Puppet workshop (with Tony Gee) - how to make simple puppets for use in the language classroom. Creating stories using the puppets that have been made.

- Spontaneity: improvised stories and ways to incorporate spontaneity into classroom storytelling

Thursday
- Storytelling techniques (With David Heathfield): how to make stories as interesting, comprehensible and learning rich as possible

- Bringing personal storytelling alive - activities for encouraging the telling of learners’ personalised stories and anecdotes.

- Spontaneous and collaborative storymaking - whole class story-making activities where every idea is included in the storybuilding process.

Friday
- Stories and task-based learning: how storytelling fits into a task-based learning syllabus

- Telling and re-telling - the value of task repetition and re-telling stories and some motivating activities which encourage this.

- Stories and the Lexical Approach - how stories provide an ideal format in which to notice, to present and to activate clusters of language

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36 Using Drama in Language Learning Workshop at SOAS, University on 13 November 2009.
Partners involved:
Teacher trainers and storytellers

Issues, related to the story:
Some participants have never told stories before. The course exposes them to live storytelling.

Involvement of storytellers:
Storytellers are brought in as an integral part of the course, to work on techniques of making stories more dramatic and engaging.

Type of the story:
Both traditional and personal stories are used.

Techniques applied/used:
Storytelling techniques to create stories collaboratively in a lively and engaging way.

Timescale:
Five day course.

Special attention to the role of storytelling

How the story contributes to achieving the goals of the training:
As one participant put it, “I would say that the storytelling course is indeed pretty innovative. I don’t know of any other courses (either in England or in my home country) where teachers learn how to use stories in their teaching, instead of the usual texts from textbooks or newspapers. The course has helped me make my teaching more interesting, for myself and my learners. I have discovered a side of me I didn’t know existed. I have actually started telling stories in class and my learners like it a lot. They are not even aware they are learning English, they just enjoy listening. My largest class consists of 32 learners and when I tell a story you can hear a pin drop. And we’re talking about 15 year-olds here. That’s quite an achievement, if I may say so.”

How telling the story facilitates learning so that it is not only fun for the participants:
The course demonstrated different stories – anecdotes, picture stories, dramatization, legends, etc. and even how they could be used in teaching mother tongue. Teachers also used a multi-sensory approach to language teaching, using all of the senses to perceive the information. This makes it easier to perceive the learning material by learners of different ages and also by learners with disabilities.

Evaluation

Influence (impact) on learners:
“I am happy to tell you that your course more or less changed my teaching philosophy. Since the Storytelling in Language Teaching Course I have worked a lot with completely illiterate adult immigrants in Finland and made huge progress after having realised that nearly everything can be taught in a form of a story.” Irma (Finland)

Strengths:
“The most important thing I learned from this course is that the teacher or the learners do not have to be high talented storytellers to enjoy and benefit from the use of storytelling in the classroom. There are many techniques and kinds of activities from which you can choose to suit your talents or your personality. I hope other teachers get the opportunity to attend this course so that many learners will be able to enjoy telling their stories in a funny, pleasant and enriching way.” Susana (Belgium)

Weaknesses:
In some circumstances, traditional stories will fail to engage difficult participants. In those cases, more personal stories should be brought to the fore.

Recommended books and resources for further information

www.worldstories.org.uk
www.storymuseum.org.uk
Tips and tricks

If you start using storytelling in the learning environment, you will encounter two kinds of language:

1. The first is abstract, logical and objective. It appeals to thought, it explains, analyses, evaluates and conveys ideas and concepts. The listener has no images or sensations when he/she listens. He/she moves around a bit, doodles, looks in their bag. This language has become the most common - the language of information.

2. The second is a visual and sensorial language; it is the language of sights, smells, sounds, feelings. It produces images in the listener’s head. It is concrete, subjective, detailed and specific. It relates to our senses, our emotions, and our human experiences. It is the language of the heart. Look at the listener now - he/she sits perfectly still.

Understanding the difference between the two is the key to using oral storytelling in adult learning. Anyone who can switch freely between these languages can enthral their listeners, influence them and leave them remembering what was said.

What is a story?

You need four main ingredients to create stories and understand the art of storytelling.

1. A person: the main character or subject. If we do not have someone through whose nose we can smell or in whose shoes we can walk, how can we bring our senses to bear on the story? Or, more precisely, awaken the listeners’ memories of their own sensory experiences.

2. A place: an environment in which we hear sounds, the sun shines or the wind blows cold.

3. The dilemma: a problem. In these lies the crux of why we tell stories, we want to understand what it is to be human. Problems come in all shapes and sizes, a shoe lace might snap, a volcano erupt, the stock market crashes, or a man says no at the altar.

4. The end: What was suggested in the beginning of the story is now being fulfilled. Either the dilemma is solved or not. The end reflects your reasons for telling this very story. Not all endings are happy, but you should be sure where you want to land with your story. It is your place of safety at the end of the journey.

How to choose a story?

A native American proverb says that “the world is full of stories and sometimes they are willing to be told”. It is also said that you do not choose the stories, but the stories choose you. This is no hocus pocus because some stories “trigger” something in you and give you an idea. The rule is that you choose something you feel like telling, that awakens an excitement in you.

The selection of stories may belong to a specific category or theme and are in many cases dependent on external circumstances like the nature of the pedagogical method. You can create your own story or select one you have heard or one that is written or recorded. What is important is that the story meets your own and your learners’ needs.

To begin the search for storytelling material, you might consider the following:

- your own style
- what you feel comfortable with
- the students
- the training programme

If you are new to storytelling, it can often pay to create a repertoire of short stories, rather than one long story. The well of stories is unending, look at your own life, your family’s history...
and your traditions. Stories can be found at the dinner table at home, at the library and on the Internet. But we must take precautions. We must show sensitivity towards stories and their origins. There are “forbidden” stories and you must adhere to copyright laws. It is often easier to learn a story you have heard, and to be on the safe side, when you hear a story you want to tell, ask the storyteller for permission. Check the sources for your stories and look at different variations of one story and make the story your own.

To boil it down to some simple advice, we recommend the following:

1. If you and your listeners/students are inexperienced with storytelling, choose short stories.
2. When you start looking for stories, search your own background and culture. We can be easily fascinated by stories from other cultures, but stories have often been told in a particular context and we can misinterpret the function of a story if we are not familiar with them.
3. If you make the story up yourself, whether it is based on your own life or made up completely, tell and try it out on family and colleagues before you tell it to the learners.
4. If you want to tell a story you hear, check with the person who told the story if it is okay to tell it or ask for the source.
5. If the story is written by an author, ask for permission. In some countries it is okay to use stories free of charge for educational purposes.
6. If you find the story on the Internet, make sure you use stories from places that provide the sources of the stories.
7. And finally what we really would recommend is to create a small storytelling circle together with your colleagues or friends. You can meet once a month and share stories, then you can get an increased repertoire, give each other feedback and practice telling.

Two examples of stories

Man and animals
A long time ago all the animals came together. They had been told that God would create a creature that would surpass them all, namely, man. Yet the animals thought that they had something that man would never get and that man would always admire the animals for. The animals began to boast about their abilities. The horse said that man would always admire its beauty, the lion its strength, the elephant its size and so on. In the middle of all of this the animals heard a little voice saying “I also have something that people always wish they had”, “who said that?” the animals said and looked around. Among them they saw a little snail. The animals laughed and said “you ugly little thing, what do you have that people will always yearn for?” With his tiny voice the Snail answered “Time”. (Oral source: Helen East)

The Bat
Once there was a great conflict between the birds and the animals. The birds and animals got ready for war. The bat did not want to participate in the war. The birds passed his perch and said “come with us” but he said “I am an animal.” Later on, some animals where passing underneath him and looked up and said “Come with us” but he said “I am a Bird.” Luckily at the last moment peace was made, and no battle took place, so the Bat came to the Birds and wished to join in the rejoicings, but they all turned against him and he had to fly away. He then went to the animals, but soon had to beat a retreat, or else they would have torn him to pieces. “Ah,” said the Bat, “I see now, he that is neither one thing nor the other, and has no friends”. (Source: Aesop’s Fables)

Advice for the new storyteller

- You can: People have been telling stories for thousands of years. The art of storytelling will never die. You tell stories every day. Maybe you have already noticed how easy it is to capture the listeners. You can!
- Rehearse: Tell the same story over and over again. Find people to listen. The story will change - you will change - as the story becomes more and more yours. Through rehearsing you will find yourself more secure in the storytelling and more able to embroider it in your own way.
- Select stories intuitively: The story that you are instinctively attracted to is your story. Or the one you find yourself marvelling at, or the one that keeps pestering you without you knowing why. Allow a story to choose you. Be sensitive to its own logic and what you find you want to say with the story. Change it so it fits you but without altering “the bones”. Make the story yours.
- Distinguish “the bones” of the story: The story has a plot - a skeleton that is independent of the setting or the context it had when you found it. Expose these “story bones”, maybe through short notes or bullet points in drawings or text. Then fill out the skeleton with new flesh: your own settings, your details, your interpretation of the idea.
- Do you have to keep “the bones” in old stories?: Traditional
material is ours and we can do what we want with it. But there are strong reasons to respect a material that has passed from mouth to mouth for centuries - sometimes thousands of years. Many stories are not understandable until you start to tell them. These stories were never intended to be literature.

- Storytelling is imagery: a language of the senses. Imagine going from place to place in the story: what do you see? What kind of light is there in each place? What time of day is it? How does it smell? What you see and experience with your senses allows the listener to experience the story in their mind’s eye. Therein lies the trick.

- Memory techniques: to really see the story, scene by scene with all its details, is the way to remember stories of all lengths. See and experience them as if they are places you have been to, not something abstract you have memorised.

- Oral storytelling is not text: It is never about learning a text by heart. A text may have been the source for a story, but put it away as soon as possible and begin to tell it orally.

- Beginning and end: be clear on how to start your story and how to end it. These are the two abutments that allow you to safely move around as you want, in between them. In the beginning and the end of the story, its meaning and your ideas can be found - what you want to say by telling it. The end ties together all the strands that you started unravelling at the beginning.

- Warning about explanations and using more abstract language: especially in the beginning of the story. You will see right away that you do not have the listeners with you, that they quickly get tired. It is the images that enthrall, that are the real storytelling language. The sooner you can give them the first image at the start, the better. And let the story end in silence rather than attempting to explain it. Stories speak for themselves; that is part of their magic.

- Being a storyteller is not a role: The storyteller is you, and the story comes from within you. You have chosen it and made it yours, or you have created it. It is this that makes storytelling unique. The meeting between the narrator and the listener is genuine and authentic. Therefore, everything should be as much you as possible; your voice, your accent, your gestures, and your posture.

- Ask someone to listen: Skilled and loving criticism is gold. Start a storytelling group where you will listen and give each other feedback.

- The lie is a friend who can tell a deeper truth than cold reality. This is the secret behind all cultural expression. Storytelling is always subjective. “A good lie can go from Baghdad to Constantinople while the truth is looking for his sandals“, as the Arabic proverb says.

- Who can say what is truth?: Did you have a mean grandmother who never would have told you a story? If you want to weave one into your story, then invent a new one. It is never too late to have a happy childhood.

- But there may of course be facts you want to convey, absolutely. Nothing is more appropriate than weaving facts into a story. Wrapped up in a story, facts are far less forgettable.

- When to speak truth and when to lie?: It is most important to clarify the purpose of your presentation. What do you want to achieve? Fact is no end in itself, nor fiction. They are your tools.

- Storytelling is communication: Eye contact is important, you read in the eyes of the listeners how you should angle the story. How your listeners are placed is important, a horse-shoe set-up all on the same level is ideal. The room should have regular, uniform illumination, not salon darkness as at the theatre. The meeting with the other listeners is part of the magic. You can develop the communication and pull the listeners into the story in different ways; with looks and gestures, direct address and improvised editing. It strengthens the contact and makes listeners even more alert.

- Your story is changing and becomes a little different for each new listener. Good, that is just as it should be.

- Storytelling is creating together: the listeners are not passive recipients. On the contrary, they are working hard to create the world you evoke. The meeting of the teller and listener in storytelling is creative and energising. But, beware, show respect for the listeners. They remain attached because they accept the contract between you in the situation (or because they are forced). The power of storytelling is strong: the narrator has the power to manipulate the listener’s inner imagery. Be aware of it and make sure that your listeners feel comfortable.

- Forgotten something in your story: No problem, you can change the story, and it will most likely still work. Probably no one has noticed. Or ask the listeners - they will surely help you willingly and quickly, once they are inside the story.

- The response from the listeners is a receipt of your storytelling. Did you not catch them? If so, don’t say to yourself “Oh, they weren’t interested”. Instead say: “Oh, I want to become a better storyteller.”

- Nervous? It is not visible. No one knows about it except you, so do not talk about it. Breathe calmly and use the energy in the tension, it gives you focus.

- Be proud of yourself. It is infectious. It evokes respect. Everybody needs meetings with people who stand for what they
convey, with good self-esteem. If you get applause, receive it happily.

- What can you tell: Parables, wisdom stories, fables, jokes, anecdotes, fairy tales, myths, old legends and urban legends - all constitute traditional material that has passed from mouth to mouth for centuries. It is yours; you own it together with all people of the world. It is an inexhaustible treasure, but make the story your own; do not copy the details.

- Your own memories, experiences, observations, life stories and family stories. This is perhaps the most important treasure of untold, unique stories. But be personal, do not be private.

- Site history: What has happened here? Are there site-specific stories like tales, ghost stories, anecdotes? And what are the stories about your school, your work or your company? How was it born? How did it overcome crises? What stories are in its successes? What anecdotes reflect its soul, purpose or vision? What values do you want to convey? Maybe you have a story about an object and its history. You can convey an interpretation of all this with your storytelling.

- Literature and author-written fairy tales: If the author is alive, you need to ask for permission. Beware that if there are storytellers who tell their own stories, they may have copyright.

- Facts: to weave facts into a story is fun and effective. Just do not forget the recipe for a story. Even a stone can be the main character; you just have to give it some human characteristics.

- Make stories yourself: anything can become a story. Let your imagination run free and pick up whatever comes to you.

- What you tell need not be in any way remarkable, unique or ingenious. Quite the contrary, tell with joy and dedication, that’s enough. That’s the best.

Where can I find stories?

1. **Listen.** Visit storytelling events. If the stories are traditional you can borrow them - but it is decorum to ask first, and then make the story your own. If you have the good fortune to live near a vibrant old storytelling culture, you are to be congratulated. Keep your ears wide open.

2. **Read.** Search the children’s literature, folklore and religion sections at the library. Do you have books at home? Organise a small storytelling shelf where you can begin collecting books of stories. Look on the internet, there are hundreds of websites with stories. Try searching for multiple variations of a story, they provide many angles from which to approach the same tale.

3. **Interview** relatives or elderly people. Ask them to share their stories. To get them started, you might ask them about objects or photographs. Ask about the details. Feed back to them in a friendly manner the last words they have said and they will continue.

4. **Tell** jokes, embarrassment or intricacies of your life or your business to someone, without ambition that it will be a “story”. Or write freely and unconditionally until you find a thread.

5. **Observe.** Stop whenever you see something interesting - at home, in town, in the woods; anywhere. Stories unfold everywhere!

How to remember stories?

It is much easier to remember a story than you think. You are actually journeying inside it as you tell, going from place to place; so why should one forget that one is in a birch forest or that the curtains are yellow and move in the wind. We know how it looks and how it feels, because we are there while we tell. If you pick up memories of places and people in your own life, and secretly put them into your story it is even easier.

“A focus on the story alone, to the exclusion of the interaction between the storyteller and the listener, misses the point of storytelling.” (S. Denning, 2001)

But how will you remember ten stories, or thirty or a hundred? As you continue with storytelling, your repertoire will grow rapidly. You need to have your repertoire arranged, documented and readily available. Think through how you will organise it in the way that suits you. Recording stories when you tell them, or keeping the outlines in sketches or text, filing them in your computer or a binder. A small warning though, if you start writing down the stories “word for word”, you are moving into a different art form, and it can obstruct the orality of storytelling.

What are the storytellers’ tools?

Among cultural workers the storyteller is unique; he/she creates his/her performance by him/herself from start to finish with some exceptions. Therefore, the list of tools is too long to fully detail in this manual, but each of the tools has a single purpose;
to serve the narrative. Below is a listing of 18 tools used by storytellers:

1. Choice of story - intuition, needs, genres, truth and falsehood
2. Editing - weaving the story, beginning and end, introduction, chronology, frame, parallel versions, comment
3. Situation - organising the room, the light, objects, and the meeting with the listeners
4. Attitude - how with which inner and outer attitude and bearing do I present the story?
5. Relationship - interaction with the listeners and other environmental factors
6. Language - your own language, dialect, slang or literary language
7. Level of Intensity - plus, neutral or minus!
8. Voice - tone, expression and carry
9. Tempo & rhythm - including pacing and pausing
10. Dialogue - you can say the characters’ dialogue or use reported speech
11. Sound & silence - use sounds other than the voice; and let pauses speak
12. Body - facial expressions, posture, gestures, spatial relationships, movement in the room
13. Concretising - have we let the concrete language, the language of senses, convey the story? Or is it abstractly told so that the listener does not get a “movie in his head”?
14. Comments - are we aware when we are commenting and when we are really telling? How can we let the comments become part of the story?
15. Perspective - outside the story; or inside the story; aware or unaware of what is going to happen
16. Unforeseen events in the moment of telling - the most elegant way to meet a disturbance is to weave it into the story, if possible.
17. Combination - how to combine the components the story is woven from? Are expressions duplicated, so that a gesture or sound says the same thing as the words, or does each have its own significance?
18. And finally - in all creative activities minimalism is a virtue. When you are finished with the story, make it shorter. Force yourself to tell it in half the time. It will surely benefit the story.

Good luck with your storytelling
CHAPTER 4

Good practice examples
This chapter presents a series of good practice examples assembled by the Sheherazade Team demonstrating the use of storytelling in adult education programmes across Europe. These examples can be categorised into two main groupings namely good practices aimed at promoting social inclusion and good practices aimed at improving language skills of adult learners. There are, as one might expect, obvious overlaps between the two categories as often the improvement of language skills can stimulate integration in the society and thus enhance social inclusion. In the main, we have presented these examples and grouped them using the key motivation for the project as the guiding factor.

Each good practice example provides information on the target group, the setting or context, the learning objectives and the role storytelling played within the project. We specifically focus on and showcase the opportunities provided by storytellers and storytelling techniques within these learning projects. A quick guide to our good practice examples are outlined in the table below:

### Promoting Social Inclusion

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Promoting Social Inclusion amongst Adult Learners

Zeit.Geschichten - Austria

Background

Target group:
People living in the same neighbourhood with different cultural backgrounds.

Context/needs:
The starting point for the Time Stories (Zeit Geschichten) project was the thought of creating a suitable space for the stories of the people of the Vienna Brunnenmarkt. The Brunnenmarkt stands for living, thriving diversity. People from a wide range of backgrounds live here side by side, and influence the course of life in this market area. Illiterates and academics, the impoverished and the well-off, people from all manner of religions and countries. Hidden behind all of these so-called “cultural, social, religious, and financial backgrounds” are personal stories. During the initial introduction of this project in 2009, the Community Arts Centre Brunnenpassage had already been intensively involved with storytelling. International storytellers regularly take to the stage here, there are open-floor sessions where everyone is free to tell stories, and there are workshops open for everyone.

Objectives:
With this new project, Brunnenpassage wanted to involve those who did not visit and take part in existing events and to create a space for their life time stories.

Detailed description

Activities:
The project has two stages: the story search and the story walk. The story search is described below (see “Methodology”). The story walk consists of 5 or 6 personal stories, which are as varied as possible, both funny and tragic, from the childhood as well as something from the last decade. They are told in different places in the neighbourhood, for example a coffeehouse, at the hairdresser’s shop, a private home, pub or at a doctors practise. As a result, due to reasons of limited space, the audience is limited to 8 to 15 persons per story walk. Because of the time taken to go from one place to another, the arrival at an unknown place, and the fact that the telling of the stories never quite unfolds as planned, the walk typically lasts around 90 minutes. Many participants say that this time between the stories was good, as it helped in “digesting” the story and preparing for the next one.

Techniques used/methodology:
An important part of the story search is the idea of contacting total strangers and people, with whom we do not have a personal relation. The first step is to establish a situation where people are willing to sit down and talk. The next step is to find possible stories or memories from which a story could emerge. The next idea was that all the stories should be connected to a particular year. This stipulation serves to ensure the focus on a particular event. For example once a participant remembered the year in which he bought his first car. After some talk about whether there were any special incidents connected with this car, it crossed his mind, that this was the same year he experienced the earthquake in Istanbul.
The search for stories and the preparation of the storytellers is primarily a process of attentive listening and questioning. The next step is to identify an incident which provides enough material for 5 to 10 minutes of storytelling. If the story should expand in the telling, and the storyteller gets side tracked in incidental details, the story is given a 4 to 5 point structure. This structure can be implemented by the story (re)searcher through summarising the story with a few key words at the beginning and at the end of every meeting, and laying emphasis on the structure of the story.

Another possibility is to deploy specific questions, which guide the storyteller along the path of her/his story. The participants should be the one to narrate turning points of their own story, as often as possible, during this preparation. If the story has a clear structure, but is too sparse, the only option is to ask questions, in order to unearth other sensory impressions, memories and emotions. Almost no participants told a story straight from the beginning through to the end at their first encounter. In any case, the beginning and ending of the story should be clearly laid down as a structure. This works best when using vivid moments, which leave a strong impression.

Issues, related to the story:
Many people initially say that they had no story to tell. This is why, during the first contact, one says that memories are collected. Sometimes a piece of paper with a random year’s figures written on it is a great help in beginning, just to spark the imagination and help people to focus on something. “Do you connect a particular experience with these numbers? Perhaps a celebration, an accident, a love, a birth or a death?” Sometimes it helped when the person collecting the stories shared details of his own life “Just to give an example: I began my schooling in that year, and I clearly remember the first day” or “that was the year my family moved to Denmark.”

In some cases people were willing to meet and tell stories, but finally did not want to take part in the story-walk. The important thing is not to hold on to the projected end result, or viewing these meetings as failures. In case one of the participants draws a blank while telling their story, or simply forgets important details, or even the turning point of the story, it is always possible to intervene by asking questions. However, while doing so it is important to feign ignorance, as though one were not entirely certain as to how the story continues. Never openly correct people, or directly remind them that they have forgotten to tell a part of their story.

Involvement of storytellers:
The stories were collected by a team of three people, who were involved in the fields of storytelling and theatre; in this case, however, they acted as listeners, facilitators and coaches. During the tour, this team remained in the background. After having gained experiences, we trained a group of students to collect stories for the project.

Type of the story:
The story-walk is made up of personal stories, which means that the storyteller is a part of their own story. In terms of content, there should be no limitations. The stories should have duration of five and ten minutes.

Timescale:
The search for stories began approximately 4 weeks before the preannounced story walks. There are people, who are well organised, and others who consider it as strange to plan something several weeks ahead of time “Come and remind me a week before!” Cultural differences have to be considered. Some stories were found just a few days before the story walk. The intensity of the preparations for every single story varies from a single meeting and a telephone call, up to four meetings.

Special attention to the role of storytelling
You can find many projects about collecting stories, which are somehow similar. This project focusses on empowering people to tell their stories themselves, by using their own vocabulary, speaking in dialect or with accent, and for some even by making grammar mistakes. This is done by the belief, that their stories are good and worth listening to, in spite of the fact that they are no perfect storytellers. The encounter between the teller and his audience is a unique experience.

When some stories were about to be published, one participant declined to have their story printed, stating that it was nice for her to tell her story to these nine strangers, but she did not want to share this personal story with people without being able to see their faces. This remark shows the special quality of storytelling.
**Evaluation**

**Impact on learners:**
As a result of the positive feedback, both from the audience as well as the tellers, the project took place a number of times. We know for a certainty that several people from the neighbourhood, who previously had no contact with each other, now greet each other. The hairdresser, who told us about her marriage, has found a new plumber, the one who told us about how he had to spend the nights in winter in a house made out of snow. After we published some of the stories in a book, some of the storytellers were very eager to acquire sufficient copies.

**Strengths:**
The strength of this project is that the event is unusual and exciting; the participants come into places which are largely unknown and sometimes entirely private, and listen to stories from complete strangers. The setting alone is exciting in and of itself, as a result of which there is no real expectation to meet extraordinary storytellers. This is important, as some of the storytellers became nervous and forgot important details, whereas others get so carried away that it is difficult to stop them. The large majority of our audience was always exceptionally patient, and grateful for having shared these personal stories.

**Weaknesses:**
The preparatory phase of this project needs people who can empathise well, and have a lot of patience and time. It is important to regard the search for potential storytellers as a vital part of the project. To judge the project solely on the basis of the story walk leads to disappointments, as some people tell engaging stories, are willing to meet again to take part, but cancel on the day of the story walk. To approach strangers and cajole them into telling a story requires an overcoming of one’s own social inhibitions. All those who tried to collect stories for the Zeit.Geschichten project have also experienced being rejected. But the experience of encountering disarming openness and incredible stores make it worthwhile for all.

**Recommended books and resources for further information**
The stories of the first 7 story walks have been published as a book in German, but of course, it only gives a rough idea of the live experiences. The book is available at the address below.

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**Personal data about the presenter of the good practice**

Brunnenpassage  
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Learning Community - Belgium

**Background**

**Target group:**
Refugees, particularly women forced to leave their country for political reasons

**Context:**
5 organisations from Wales, The Netherlands, Great Britain, Denmark and Belgium working with these women to empower them and give them a chance to integrate and to find a job. (Grundtvig Learning partnership – Conferences in the partner countries)

**Needs:**
To integrate in their new homeland’s society and labour market

**Objectives:**
To improve skills of economically disadvantaged groups of women refugees with a view to enhancing their participation in society and the labour market.

**Detailed description**

**Activities:**
Storytelling by the women and reflection on it; theoretical background by experts about the power of stories and expressing feelings; diversity and empowerment in EU countries, and workshops on content and common patterns of the stories told.

**Methodology:**
Life Stories, The Netherlands, working towards a life book as a means to empower people
www.bol.com

**Partners involved:**
Quality Center Vluchtelingenvrouwen (NL)
Intercultureel Vrouwencentrum Antwerpen (BE)
Center for Women’s Equality (DK)
Reading Refugee Support (UK)
Women Connect First (UK)

**Involvement of storytellers:**
No storytellers involved, only experts coming from the different partner countries providing support and some theoretical background on refugee problems and the way to handle it.

**Type of stories:** Life stories

**Techniques applied/used:**
No special techniques used; storytelling is just a way to express feelings and experiences. Analysing the common patterns of the stories told.

**Time scale:** Two days meetings during 2 project years

**Special attention to the role of storytelling**

How the story contributes to achieving the goals of the training:
Through their life stories the women shared their past and present experiences in a country that is not theirs.

**How telling the story facilitates learning so that it is not only fun for the participants:**
Storytelling was not entertaining at all but meant to give the women an opportunity to tell their life stories and to get conscious of the fact that they are not alone living the same things. The sharing of stories equated to empowerment. Storytelling is the starting point for a “personal development plan”.

**Evaluation**

**Impact and strengths:**
Influence on the way refugee women perceive themselves; consciousness that the problems/difficulties they are dealing with are not unique. Consciousness that the problems are for a large part produced by the context, not by their own deficit leading to the empowerment of women.

**Weaknesses:**
No conscious use of storytelling techniques

**Personal data about the presenter of the good practice**

Name: YWCA (Intercultureel Vrouwencentrum Antwerpen)
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Present Yourself as an Expert
Through the Story - Bulgaria

**Background**

**Target group:**
Unemployed adults, many with university degree. Some of them were close to retirement.

**Context / needs:**
The training group was composed of people who for different reasons were temporary or long-term without employment. Some of them were discouraged; others felt uncertain in terms of finding new opportunities. There were also participants who were not aware of the skills and qualification they had or not willing to acquire new ones. Whatever reasons they had, they all needed to gain self-confidence and be able to present, in the best possible way, their skills in order to find work more easily. The training focused on refining their presentation and oral skills.

**Objectives:**
The main objective of the training was to help participants to improve their skills for self-presenting and express their strong qualities, merits and capacity. The learning goals were to improve:
- the participants’ self-confidence
- their skills for self-presenting (oral presentation)
- their communication, teamwork and collaboration skills
- their skills to evaluate others’ presentations

**Detailed description**

**Activities & Methodology:**
The stories were incorporated as a core tool for delivering the entire training. The initial stories were used as ice-breakers. The trainers asked each participant to present themselves through a short story in 3 to 5 minutes. Teachers triggered them through several questions like: In what are you an expert? Why do you think you are an expert in that? How did you become an expert? In the beginning, the trainees were surprised a little by these questions. In order to overcome that moment and to motivate participants to start sharing, as well as to give them more time to think about their own story, two leaders of the training, started to present their stories. The stories of the trainers were not related to their professional life, but rather to their competences. Thus, they showed to the trainees that even small achievements are important. This approach gave an impetus to the participants and they already had the courage to present themselves. In addition, the participants started to understand that they had strong sides, which could give them a competitive advantage. All this worked in the direction of participants’ self-confidence, self-estimation and at the same time to train their skills for oral presentation.

Next, trainers wrote down on the board a theme for the next phase, the topics vary from training to training. In the second phase of the training the unemployed were asked to present as many associations as possible within the theme. Based on the associations of each participant, told during the ice-breaker stories and the identified personal expertise, the unemployed participants were grouped in small teams of 3 to 4 persons.

Thus, the training continued in the next phase, where each team chose a sub-topic within the main theme in order to generate constructive ideas and to present them in the best possible way to the other teams. The teams then had time to discuss what to do and select the winning approach, so to be better than others and find a solution for attractive presentations - what are the important elements of the presentation. At the end of the phase, each team presented its idea in front of the others. The other teams had the task to evaluate the presenting group and share their opinion on each presentation, arguing their position.

**Partners involved:**
There were no partners involved. The teachers played the role of the storytellers.

**Issues, related to the story:**
As often happens when people do not know each other yet, the beginning was somewhat difficult and the participants were either silent or started to tell their stories a little timidly. The positive atmosphere and the funny stories inserted by the trainers appropriately and with tact, helped to overcome the initial hindrances.

Another problem was the time observation. When the learners became very interested in the topic discussed, it was difficult to stop them working on it and to ask them to present to the others. The participants were deeply involved into the evaluation of the others’ presentations, analysing their strengths and weaknesses, giving ideas for better solutions and thus forgetting the
time limitations of the training session. In addition, when they started presenting, most of the teams did not stick to the time-frame.

**Involvement of storytellers & techniques applied/used:**
The storytelling techniques were applied by two trainers of the class. The use of the personal stories was not expected by the participants and surprised them.

**Timescale:**
1 hour – 1.5 hours: Present yourself as expert through a story
15 – 30 minutes: Setting up the topic and association on it
4 hours: Split into teams and working on a sub-topic
2 hours: Preparing a “team” story
2 hours: Each team presents the teamwork and the idea developed with evaluation by the other teams. Proposing new solutions and ways for improvement.

**Special attention to the role of storytelling**
The storytelling was the key to the training, because the first main problem of the trainees was that they did not believe in their own abilities as their self-esteem and self-confidence was low. The first step was to help them discover and express their strengths and thus become more self-confident by thinking about their own story which presented them as an expert in certain fields. Working with the others and helping the team to generate original ideas was the next step to the success. Finally, presenting their results to the other teams encouraged participants to believe that they were able to present themselves in a good way, particularly to potential employers.

**Evaluation**

**Impact:**
Although in the beginning learners were surprised, they liked the training. All participants shared their willingness to have more sessions and to work longer on the improvement of personal self-presenting skills.

**Strengths:**
The training was based on a process of sharing stories, discovering the community of others as a personal power and supporting the personal awareness through the stories of the others.

**Weaknesses:**
Use of storytelling activities as ice-breaker was a problem for one of the participants who was very resistant and refused to take part in the activity. It took special efforts and diplomacy to recover the situation.

**Personal data about the presenter of the good practice**

Name of the Teachers:
Eliza Stefanova
Nikolina Nikolova
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Story Collecting Workshop - France

Background

Target group:
This workshop was held in collaboration with an association for women in a disadvantaged community in a suburb of Paris. The participants were women from sub-Saharan Africa (Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, etc.) many of whom were not yet fluent in French.

Context:
Because the community in which the workshop took place was one of the main areas where cars were burned during the 2005 riots, it had a reputation as being a difficult or troubled area. The goal of this storytelling project is to help promote a positive image of the community by celebrating its cultural diversity and unique history through storytelling and the collection of stories. The participants in this particular workshop were taught how to collect stories from other members of their community and how to lead workshops so that stories could circulate throughout the neighbourhood. They also learned a number of storytelling techniques.

Objectives:
• to empower workshop participants
• to promote inclusion and cross-cultural communication

Detailed description

Activities:
The storytellers led the participants in a few games and exercises, including a visual memory game and told them some stories. The participants were then asked if these stories reminded them of any that they already knew to encourage them to share their own stories.

Methodology:
Because the goal of this workshop was to encourage participants to share their own stories, it was important to establish an environment of trust. The workshop began with a few ice-breaker activities. Next, the storytellers told a few stories before inviting the participants to tell their own stories.

Partners involved:
This project involved a group of professional storytellers and a local women’s association in a disadvantaged community in a suburb of Paris.

Issues, related to the story:
According to one of the storytellers who led the workshop, the biggest obstacle was getting the participants to share their own stories. He finally realised that the women did not think it was appropriate to share their stories in front of a man. To make them more comfortable, he was absent the following session and allowed two other colleagues, both female storytellers, to lead the workshop alone. The participants then felt comfortable enough to share their stories.

Involvement of storytellers:
This workshop was led by a team of two storytellers, one of whom also had experience as an adult trainer.

Type of the story:
The women were encouraged to share folktales from their respective countries, stories about their neighbourhood, or any other type of story they wished to share.

Techniques applied/used:
Because the participants were not completely at ease in French, they were encouraged to first tell their stories in their native languages. One of the trainers/storytellers spoke a bit of Bambara, which was the native language of many of the participants.

Timescale:
This workshop took place over multiple short sessions.
Special attention to the role of storytelling

How the story contributes to achieving the goals of the training:
In this workshop, storytelling was used as a tool to facilitate cross-cultural communication and promote confidence in the participants. Despite the cultural differences that separated the participants from each other and from the French trainers, they were able to find common ground through storytelling.

How telling the story facilitates learning so that it is not only fun for the participants:
Besides the entertainment value of the stories and games used in the workshop, it also had a pedagogical purpose. The participants, who had not yet mastered French, were able to practice their oral communication through storytelling. The workshop also promoted learning through cross-cultural exchange.

Evaluation

Influence (impact) on learners:
This workshop was a success because the trainers were able to adapt to their audience and establish the trust of the participants. The final result was that the participants were then able to share their own stories and participate in the collection of stories from other members of their community.

Strengths:
In this project, storytelling serves as a means of empowering members of a disadvantaged community. Participants are given the tools to counter negative perceptions of their neighbourhood and are also given a platform to share their culture with others. It also is a good activity for those learning the local language (French) because it gives them the opportunity to speak in front of an audience without the pressure that may come with a more formal context.

Weaknesses:
It may sometimes be difficult to get participants to share their stories because of cultural norms (in this case, the women did not feel comfortable sharing their stories with a man present) or the sensitive nature of certain stories. This is why it is important to be cognizant of the cultural context of the participants and to adapt so that participants feel comfortable sharing their stories.

Personal data about the presenter of the good practice

Name: Jacques Combe
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Ways in the City - Germany

**Background**

**Target group:**
The Ways in the City workshop took place with a group of female language learners living in the same urban quarter of Germany. The women were drawn from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, spoke eight different first languages and ranged from 17 to 50 years.

**Context:**
The storytelling workshop took place within the framework of a 20 - 25 hour weekly language course. The overall duration of the course was 500 hours, divided into blocks of 100 hours. Between these blocks, there was a break period in which the storytelling workshop took place. Attendance was not compulsory and free of charge as it did not form part of the curriculum of the main integration course.

**Needs:**
Many of the participants had already lived in Germany for years, but due to their low German language skills, the participants lived quite isolated lives within their communities. The reason for attending the language course varied. Some attended the language course to learn German, while others took the language course as a part of an integration training programme to achieve German citizenship.

**Subject matter:**
The workshop was presented during the language course as a storytelling workshop with a performance, as a group at two different public events scheduled for the end of the workshop. In order to give the participants an idea of what the whole storytelling workshop was about, the storyteller came to the language course and told a story as a presentation of the workshop. The fact that a performance would be an obligatory part of the workshop, seemed to be a bit scary for some of the participants. The idea was to focus on the oral tradition from the country of their origin.

**Goals & objectives:**
Although the workshop took place with a group of learners, who were learning German, it was not an objective to improve language skills through this workshop. The objectives were:

- Social Inclusion - get to know new public spaces; active participation in a festival
- Social cohesion and strengthening the team spirit within the group
- Experience multilingualism as a resource
- Examination of the cultural dimension of language
- Using aesthetic action to give space for pre-occupation with a specific issue

**Detailed description**

**Preparation:**
The workshop was held by the language trainer together with an external storyteller. The organisation behind this project was aware of the fact that a collaboration of this type needed preparation on both sides. In order to prepare, the trainer received an extra payment of 10 hours. Before the workshop started, the storyteller came to visit the class twice. This took place in order to get an impression of their language skills to adapt the workshop to their needs. The second visit was used to tell a story as an introduction to storytelling and to present the workshop frame.

**Methodology:**
Multi linguistic storytelling
Due to the group make-up, the storyteller and the trainer decided to make the storytelling workshop multi-lingual and allow participants to also tell in their first language.

**Empowerment**
The idea to let the women also tell in their own language was to give them the possibility to present themselves differently, to show a strong side.

**The different qualities of language**
Showing such a mixture of languages in one performance demonstrates also the different qualities that languages have i.e. the melody, the sound, being expressive, etc.

**Using different storytelling techniques**
Each of the four stories that were told during the performance used different techniques. This showed on one hand, the variety of storytelling, and on the other hand it gave the women the
possibility to choose the style, which suited them most. One story was told with the help of very simple pictures, one story was told quite expressively - almost acted out, another story was told by involving the audience…

**Ways into the city – get to know new (public) spaces**
Since it was an aim of the course to get to know new places, the course started in the safe environment of the classroom of the language course, but then continued in the culture centre. People were picked up at the adult education centre. The room was prepared without tables. In the culture centre, the women were introduced to other activities in the centre. As the group comprised women, many with children activities with childcare were presented. The two performances at the two public events was of course also part of this strategy.

**Telling/Writing**
Since the learning of the German language brought these women together, it was very important for most of them not to make mistakes in German during the performance. Many of them wrote down the key phrases which they told in German. The language teacher corrected these phrases and the participants learnt them by heart. This might not be pure storytelling, but it was the most natural thing to do for the ones who needed the security. Not all participants had the need to do so. In the main, for those who told in their first language, there was no “writing and learning by heart” involved.

**Involvement of storyteller:**
The concept of the workshop came mainly from the storyteller. It was the role of the adult trainer to give the storyteller an idea of what issues would be suitable for the group. The entire workshop was led by the language trainer and storyteller together as a team.

**Type of stories:**
Stories were chosen which could be told in several languages at the same time. The storyteller came with a set of stories, but also asked the participants for stories as well. One participant proposed to tell the story of a well know children book, The Very Hungry Caterpillar. In the end this story was one of the four chosen stories for the performance. But it has to be mentioned that the story was adapted and got two alternative endings - and the menu of the caterpillar became much longer and much more international. For multi-linguistic storytelling you should prefer stories with easy storylines, rather short stories, only with a few characters, and with a repetitive structure.

**Techniques applied/used:**
*Physical warm up – awareness of body language*
Singing exercise with the song “Brother John” / “Frere Jacques” in all languages. Everyone sang a “solo” in her first language in the middle of the circle. The song was used in the following days as a ritual.

*Physical and awareness exercises: “following”, “be my mirror”*
A traditional dance for body awareness (which was a proposal of a participant).

*Working non-verbal (intercultural) communication*
Everyone makes a proposal, how to show (gesture) that you consider someone as “crazy” or Everyone makes a sound of relief or a sound of sorrow. These gestures and sounds a repeated by the other participants.

*Structuring the story by drawings*
What is the initial picture? What was the catalyst of the story? What is the final picture?

*And last but not least: try out, again and again*
Telling/listening to a bilingual version of the Nasreddin Hoca story of a pot giving birth and dying. Followed by a lively (funny) discussion about the moral of the story (do stories need a moral) and to the culture that Nasreddin Hoca belongs to. Looking for similar figures in other cultures.
Working on two stories with many repetitions. One of them (proposed by a participant) was *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, which many knew as children’s book. In the story the caterpillar eats a lot of food. The participants were asked to add a further course on the menu (in their first language) to this chain too.

**Timescale:**
A four day storytelling workshop of approximately 20 hours - the result was shown at two festivals.

**Special attention to the role of storytelling**
As participants could tell the stories in their first language they became aware of the power of the stories. They also listened to stories in German and told them as well. The final performance increased their self-confidence.

**Evaluation**
The feedback and involvement of the women in the workshop was very good. After the first performance at the festival, the organisers and the group of women decided to have a second performance at a further public event in the town. It was a good collaboration between the trainer, who already knew the group, its abilities and needs, and the artist, who brought a new input and a new approach. All the participants decided to participate in the project, after having met the storyteller in person, so they were quite motivated. These were quite ideal circumstances, which are not always easy to transfer into other educational settings.

**Influence (impact) on learners:**
The main impact on the learners was increased self-confidence.

**Strengths:**
Participants gained self-confidence thanks to this project.

**Weaknesses:**
We have no information on weaknesses of this project.

**Personal data about the presenter of the good practice**

**Organisation:**
Cooperation between VHS Gröpelingen (local division of an adult education centre) and “Kultur vor Ort e.V.” (cultural centre – see link below)

**Web:**
About the organizer:
http://www.kultur-vor-ort.com/sixcms/detail.php?template=kvo_index_d&buttonon=319&button_eins_sub=324&artikel=6328&menue=on

About the storyteller:
http://geschichtenhaendlerin.de/
The International Project - Ireland

**Background**

**Target group:**
The local Galwegian community and the isolated international community living in the refugee hotels (Direct Provision Centres) around Galway.

**Context:**
The aim of this project was to build a bridge between the local Galwegian community and the isolated international community living in the refugee hotels (Direct Provision Centres) around Galway. This bridge would nourish normal communication based on the communal experience of storytelling; this would help to eradicate labelling, prejudice and simple shyness that arise from fear of the unknown.

**Objectives/aims:**
The aim of the International Project was to use storytelling as method of connecting the international community, mainly from Africa to the local indigenous community of Galway in a relaxed non-threatening way that would encourage friendship and social integration. The project was based in Galway, Ireland.

**Detailed description**

**Activities:**
Activities undertaken by the group included initial ice breakers, including memory games. These ice-breakers were used in the first 3 weeks of the programme until they were no longer needed as the group became comfortable around each other. Supplemented by discussions and storytelling, in week 3 the facilitator also used singing to bring the group together. The group singing session seemed to be instrumental in breaking down the final barriers between group members. Following the song, the group was invited to divide into pairs and swap stories. Stories were also shared by individual participants with the whole group, and were offered by the facilitator also. As well as this formal discussions and workshops were facilitated by the coordinator so that the participants could learn about the roles and techniques of storytelling. These techniques were then practiced with the whole group. Key to the group development seemed to be the informal chats and discussions which took place between group members at the daily tea breaks.

**Methodology:**
The group met every Monday morning for 6 weeks. In that time they built group cohesion and dynamics, discussed storytelling and its place in culture and began to open up and tell stories. The group worked on performing traditional stories from each country. They also practised songs that would be integrated into the stories. The six weeks of workshops would culminate in a professional performance at a local theatre. The performance meant that the participants had to take the process seriously. Ultimately the public performance would be the medium by which connection to community could really happen. Throughout the programme, storytelling was utilised both as the end result of the programme and as the medium to get the group talking and sharing experiences and opinions with each other. At the same time as participants were telling their stories, they were also learning about how to tell stories, through workshops on voice, pitch, tone and rhythm. The new skill they were learning increased their confidence when telling stories, until by week 4, participants were happy to offer their own stories, instead of having to be probed and encouraged by the facilitator.

**Partners involved:**
The members of the group were all from African; 6 from Nigeria, 2 from Somalia and one from Chad. The group was composed of 4 women and 5 men. Ages ranged from 19 to 34 years. 3 of the participants had families with them here in Ireland, the rest were on their own.

**Issues, related to the story:**
This programme was held to build the confidence of the group members to meet with others and to swap stories and experiences. This programme aimed to promote social inclusion and to integrate these members of the internal community within their own community and within the wider Galwegian community. The performance and the workshops were told helped to build the self-confidence of all group members; it also helped to eradicate the shyness and fear they anticipated by networking with new people. As an exercise in capacity building, this storytelling workshop was very effective in realizing its aims.

**Involvement of storytellers:**
The facilitator, Claire Muireann Murphy, was a storyteller by profession, and used her experience to get the group participants to start sharing their own stories and learning the skills needed.
She did not involve any external storytellers throughout the programme, as to do so would have compromised the group dynamic and hinder group development.

**Type of the story:**
Stories varied from traditional stories and folklore to personal accounts of their native countries, and childhood stories. In some cases the stories that were told encouraged debates among the group. These discussions were facilitated by inviting participants to tell stories on a range of topics about their home country or area. For example in week 1, the group discussed their national food, in week 2 they discussed the importance of their names and heritage, and so this practice continued, supplemented by discussions on pitch, tone, rhythm and volume when telling a story, until the group had developed the skills necessary to be able to perform in front of their local community.

**Timescale:**
The project entailed 6 weeks of storytelling workshops culminating in a 2 hour performance at a local theatre.

**Special attention to the role of storytelling**

**How the story contributes to achieving the goals of the training:**
The techniques associated with storytelling were integrated throughout the entire six week programme. As well as providing a source of entertainment to the group, it was the main medium utilized in order to get people to share their stories and to build their confidence by learning and using storytelling techniques to prepare for their final performance after the 6 week programme. In this example, storytelling was used to breakdown cultural boundaries, initially between group members and then between the international group and the local Galwegian community.

**How telling the story facilitates learning so that it is not only fun for the participants:**
The nature of the storytelling group allowed social norms to be overcome and for friendships and connections to naturally develop. The social norms of Nigeria, Chad and Somalia meant that the participants would never have made connections to each other within the international community. The younger members would not have the right to speak to an older person from their society and the men are isolated living in a male-only Direct Provision Areas. So the isolation permeated far deeper than just being excluded from the host country. The use of storytelling aided the training objectives as the whole aim of the programme was to get this group to communicate both with each other and then for them to be able to integrate into the wider Galwegian community.

**Evaluation**

**Influence (impact) on learners:**
The storytellers’ performance was covered in local papers preceding the show, as well as in a follow up article in one local paper after the show. There was much talk in the audience about hosting the storytellers show again for the wider community. The greatest impact, however, was on the lives of the tellers themselves. Over the course of 7 weeks (6 week programme and the performance) the facilitator recalls seeing a gradual change in her participants. She recounts that the participants began to laugh more, interact more, to grow in confidence and self-expression, to find words instead of staying silent. Their own reaction to the show was one of true surprise; they were unprepared for the effect it would have on them and on their audience. It unified them in a way that cannot be fully described in words. They saw the power the stories they told had to make them part of something greater than themselves, a wider community. This allowed them freedom from the daily grind of their lives as people awaiting “status”.

**Strengths:**
The main strengths of the programme include the way the participants were treated and coached by the facilitator in a very holistic manner, and the success of the final performance and the way it was received by the local Galwegian community.

- The participants were never treated with pity or sympathetically, but rather as any participant in an arts project. They were never asked about their histories, their reason for coming to Galway, or the difficulties they face. These are questions they are asked every day, questions that remind them constantly of their dilemma as they “await status” and the aim of the project was to get them to see themselves as more than just ‘refugees’. Demanding excellence through the public performance allowed them to be excellent, and creating a positive artistic environment allowed them to express themselves creatively.
- The performance at the end was crucial as it demonstrated to all participants the power of this project. The community
that they live in got to witness their hard work and effort. Most important of all is the fact that the local community got to see all the people participating as Storytellers, Singers and Speakers rather than an unfamiliar face with an unfamiliar background and a label of “refugee” or “asylum seeker”. In this regard the success of the project and the community’s response to see the performance again was overwhelming.

**Weaknesses:**
The biggest weakness of this programme was faced before the programme even began in recruiting members of the international community to take part in storytelling. While this difficulty could not have been foreseen by the facilitator, it can be seen as a weakness as the potential to fill the course with the sought-after 15 participants was not realised, and instead the group was made up of only 9 participants. The difficulty in making initial contact with the international community stemmed from the fact that they were isolated and segregated amongst themselves as well as separated from the local community. Due to the difficult nature of their existence they often suffer from lethargy, depression and unwillingness to put themselves forward for projects. As a result, there were many false starts with this project.

**Personal data about the presenter of the good practice**
Clare Muireann Murphy  
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Website: www.claremurphy.org
ARTikulere - Norway

**Background**

**Target group:**
The participants were female prisoners in Bredtveit female prison. Their language is often very tough and their lack of communication skills is often a part of the reason why they have ended up in prison.

**Context:**
ARTikulere (Articulate) is an art project initiated and managed by VOX, (Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning) in a prison for women called Bredtveit. VOX is responsible for learning in prisons.
The social conditions for female prisoners in Norway are much worse than for male prisoners. The activities they get offered are fewer and of lesser quality than the ones men get; fewer opportunities to work out, access education etc.

**Objectives:**
- Language development
- Promote inclusion by improving communication skills

**Detailed description**

**Activities:**
The storyteller introduced the purpose of the workshop, which was to present a digital story in front of an audience and said that she would make them work with their own stories. It is very important that they know this in order to be able to dig into their own stories. It is also important that the storyteller tells the participants that she is after the good stories. If they say their life is awful, that doesn’t make a good story. The storyteller is “in it for the story”, and that’s what her job is to bring out the good stories.

The storyteller led the participants in a few games and exercises, including a memory game, which made the participants very proud of themselves, and told them some stories to warm them up. The participants were asked to tell stories of nice experiences from their life. They all said they had none. Then the storyteller made them draw a map of different landscapes from their lives and then stories of good experience came about. One after another they presented their map and their stories, and the other participants were choosing which stories they wanted to hear more about. This work made the participants see new aspects of their background. To tell their stories in this group and to be able to discuss what happened, opened the situations up to them and showed them positive things they had not thought about before. To tell their own stories also brought up the need to be able to express themselves properly, or more adequately in a way. When they talk about things that are meaningful, they don’t want others to misunderstand.

**Methodology:**
Another clue about making the workshop lead to a performance is the extra pressure the participants expose themselves to. People are always willing to stretch a little extra when they are going to perform something. This experience could be called the “aesthetic experience” – it is the experience of being “bigger” than you thought you could be, meaning being able to perform better.

It is necessary to spend a lot of time to make them understand what they are going to do. Because the goal of this workshop was to encourage participants to share their own stories, it was important to establish an environment of trust, but also to understand the role of the storyteller. The performance in the end of the project is a crucial part of the methodology. The workshop began with a few icebreaker activities. Next, the storyteller told a few stories before inviting the participants to tell their own stories. They draw maps of their own childhood area to help them remember stories.

The storyteller used methods from narrative therapy, but would not have achieved anything if she came in and said she wanted to heal the participants. She tells the participants that she is after the story, and a good story contains good and bad. The participants understand that intuitively.

It is crucial that the storyteller involved is a professional storyteller, and one who knows what makes a good story. All the techniques she knows she uses to dig out the good stories. It is in the “aesthetic digging” there might be an opportunity to turn the story upside down. This could be exemplified by this, the story about the little 3 year old girl who had to get up in the morning, fix herself breakfast and pack her bag and go to kindergarten alone, was not just sad and tragic - it was also a story about courage and cleverness. The “aesthetic technique” is about digging up the good pictures, and maybe finding new or hidden aspects about a story that reveals things which makes it easier to carry.
Partners involved:
The combination of two art expressions into digital storytelling in this project was a clever move. The pressure on the participants would have been far too great if they were going to perform live. It was more than enough for them to make digital stories combined with pictures. To many of the participants it would have been too much to present their stories live. This project involved one professional storyteller and an artist in fine arts and teachers working with the prisoners on a daily basis. The project was initiated by VOX and Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences was involved and facilitated the storyteller.

Involvement of storytellers:
This workshop was led by one storyteller with a lot of experience in storytelling as a performing art and as an adult trainer. She also has experience with narrative therapy.

Type of the story:
Personal stories, with no traditional stories or myths. The participants were encouraged to share their own personal stories and to tell about both good and bad things.

Techniques applied / used:
cfr. methodology

Timescale:
The storytelling workshop took place over 5 days. The whole project lasted longer.

Special attention to the role of storytelling

How the story contributes to achieving the goals of the training:
In this workshop, storytelling was used as a tool to develop the participant’s communication skills. At the same time it gave the participants the opportunity to look at their stories in new ways. This could on a long term basis alter inclusion into society.

How telling the story facilitates learning (so that it is not only fun for the participants):
By being forced into describing stories in a more detailed way and from different angles, the participants develop their communication/language skills, and the storytelling may be having some therapeutic effects.

Evaluation

Influence (impact) on learners:
The storyteller was insecure about the long-term impact on the participants after the workshop. What they managed to make to the exhibition of the whole project was however very good. And judging by the achieved sharing of stories in the 5 day workshop, it should have some positive impact. It was interesting to see the development of the language when the participants told stories that meant something to them.

Strengths:
What makes storytelling such an adequate tool for learning? The moment it feels important to tell a story in a right way, one changes the language. One makes sure the listeners understand what it is one is trying to tell.

Weaknesses:
It would have been interesting to work with the participants over a longer period.

Recommended books and resources for further information

King N. Memory, Narrative, Identity
Bakhtin M. The Dialogic Imagination

Personal data about the presenter of the good practice

Name: Sara Birgitte Øfsti Nesje
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Mother Tongue Day in Stovner bydel Norway

**Background**

*Target group:*
Citizens in Stovner district and employees in kindergartens in this district, women from very different backgrounds.

*Context:*
Information about this project is collected through an interview with one of the storytellers involved in the project. Stovner district is a part of Oslo with a high proportion of multicultural citizens. The importance of mastering your own mother tongue in order to learn other languages is one of the main ideas behind this project. It is also the idea to give self-esteem to employees in kindergartens, by letting them present a story/performance on stage at the mother tongue day. The performance is bilingual, and done by professional storytellers and the kindergarten employees. The latter pick stories from their own culture, and tell them in their own language. This is therefore also an opportunity for people in Stovner to come and hear stories in their own language. The first time they arranged the mother tongue day in Stovner, 1000 people came. Many people are still coming to the celebration today. A philosophy behind the project is to make the inhabitants of the district to become someone that matters, and let them give back to society. Immigrants moving to another country rapidly lose their stories from their cultural background, the mother tongue day is therefore also important. It gives the opportunity to present immigrants’ culture in Norway, and by that to focus upon some of the resources immigrants bring.

**Objectives:**
- Promote inclusion and language learning by improving language skills and increasing self-esteem among citizens through storytelling performance in mother tongue and celebration of mother tongue day.
- Arrange storytelling workshop with employees in kindergarten and make bilingual performances on mother tongue day.
- The target group is therefore not just the participants of the storytelling workshop, but also all the audience coming to see the performance on Mother Tongue Day. Many come to listen to stories in their own mother tongue.

**Detailed description**

*Activities:*
The storytellers started with personal stories to create confidence: doing warming-up exercises with them. Then the participants had to tell something from their childhood and from when they arrived in Norway, which was very recognisable to everyone.

*Methodology:*
- Storytelling workshop aiming at a performance on Mother Tongue Day
- Participants make a bilingual storytelling performance with a professional storyteller
- Participants tell in their own mother tongue
- Participants tell their own stories, chosen by themselves, mainly fairy tales

*Partners involved:*
Fortellerhuset (The Storytelling House), Stovner District

*Issues, related to the story:*
Personal stories were used in the introduction of the storytelling workshop. This is to make people open up and to make them talk. One should be careful when working with personal stories, and secure good and safe frames for the participants. To tell stories from childhood is a very good way of building a group. Everyone is moved and identify with each other.

*Involvement of storytellers:*
It is of great importance that the storytellers running the workshop are professionals. Professionals have an understanding of what works and not. The storytellers involved help develop the perfor-
With bilingual storytelling it is very important with some direction, as two people on stage makes a lot of impressions and signals. The directing therefore consists of reducing movement, information (what will be understood without it being explained very detailed) and making a good performance. The audience are very impressed (sometimes they are up to 200). For example one of the participants in the workshop invited her family to the performance, and they were so impressed and proud. To give the participants this feeling of coping it is necessary to make good experiences, and that is what the professional storytellers can contribute with.

**Type of the story:**
The stories that are told are mainly fairy tales. According to the storyteller fairy tales works very well in this project. They are made for oral storytelling. What makes fairy tales work so well? According to the storyteller it is because they are made by ordinary people without payment, because they want to promote a message or a cultural picture to be communicated. They are a true example of democracy. They come from the people. As a narrative the fairy tale consists of several elements that work very well in teaching and learning. Repetition for instance. There lies confidence and comfort in repetition. The storyteller claims that one needs to hear a word at least 7 times before one can learn it. There are also opportunities for creativity within repetition; the opportunity to explore how one can do something differently within a very familiar framework.

**Techniques applied/used:**
- In the beginning of the workshop personal stories are used to get the participants to know each other, to open up, and to talk. It will be personal stories on names, how they got to Norway and so on.
- Working with repetition is an important technique in the workshop. Repetition can be an important way of working creatively.
- Techniques that are used in the workshop differ, but are dependent upon the fact that the participants in the workshop do not share languages. There is focus therefore focus on other kinds of communication like body language and sounds. In bilingual storytelling the language in itself actually becomes less important.

**Timescale:**
The workshop goes on approximately once a week for several weeks and concludes with the performance.

**How the story contributes to achieving the goals of the training:**
Developing your own mother tongue is allegedly improving your ability to learn other languages. When developing a performance in storytelling one works very consciously with language and expression. According to the storyteller, the fact that the participants choose their own stories promotes their self-esteem. The participants choose stories from their own background/culture, they get resources from themselves and give to the society. This promotes self-esteem.

**How telling the story facilitates learning (so that it is not only fun for the participants):**
Storytelling as a tool for learning is very adequate concerning intercultural exchange. But it is certainly a tool for teaching morale, ethics, and what is dangerous or not. Fairy tales from different cultures often illustrate similarities and differences between cultures. Fairy tales often carry a message like, you are a part of the society, you should help others, thou shalt not be greedy. Very often social values are at the core of fairy tales. According to the storyteller, people from cultures outside of the western countries more often have these kinds of social values present in their minds; like one should listen to experience; one should respect older people etc.

**Evaluation**

**Influence (impact) on learners:**
The interviewee/storyteller claims that the project has had an important impact on the use of, and education in mother tongue in Stovner District.

**Strengths:**
The telling in the mother tongue, the collaboration with professional storytellers, the performance in front of a real audience, the target group of the project is wider than the participants of the workshop, it is the whole community

**Weaknesses:**
We are lacking information on the project to describe the eventual weaknesses about the good practice, and none were mentioned in the interview with the storyteller.

**Personal data about the presenter of the good practice**
Name: Georgiana Keable, Storyteller Norway
The Prodigal Son Dilemma - Spain

**Background**

**Target group:**
Participants including migrants from 18 different countries (mostly from Asia, with a few from South America) and local Spanish people.

**Needs – context:**
This activity took place in Barcelona, Spain and was part of a larger programme organised in collaboration with the organisation Casa Asia.

**Objectives:**
- Promote intercultural exchange between migrants and Spanish population;
- Help migrants work through the difficulties and emotions involved in the migration process.

**Detailed description**

**Activities:**
This activity consists of the interactive telling of a version of the story of the prodigal son.

**Methodology:**
The story is told as follows:
A man lives in the countryside on a farm with his son and daughter. [PAUSE: At this point, the participants are asked to draw how they imagine the farm looks.] As he gets older, the son starts to get bored with farm life and wants to move to the city. [PAUSE: Participants are invited to imagine and discuss what aspects of city life may be appealing to the son…]

As the story continues, the interactive pauses at key moments in the story serve as a means of facilitating discussion on a number of issues related to the migration process; motivations for leaving one’s native country; what is lost and gained in the migration experience; internal conflicts regarding family obligations and personal goals in migration, etc. Each pause involves a different activity. At the end of the story, when the son has returned penniless to his family’s farm after his father’s death, participants take turns playing the roles of the son and his sister in pairs and then discuss as a group whether the sister should allow her brother to come back to the farm.

**Partners involved:**
This activity was organised by La Xixa Teatre, a non-profit organisation that aims to research, develop and expand theatrical and educational tools as a means of social transformation.

**Issues, related to the story:**
Participation is vital to the success of this activity. To promote participation, the workshop facilitators often had participants discuss or act out scenes of the story in pairs or small groups before having a group level discussion.

**Involvement of the storyteller:**
This workshop was led by two professional actors. No storytellers were involved.

**Type of the story:**
The story is a variation of “The Prodigal Son,” a parable found in the bible that often appears in literature and popular culture.

**Techniques applied/used:**
This activity involved the use of a variety of techniques to spark discussion, notably drawing, role-playing and debate.

**Timescale:**
The activity takes roughly two hours and can be done in one day or in two one-hour sessions over two days.

**Special attention to the role of storytelling**
How the story contributes to achieving the goals of the training:
The main goal of the course was to use storytelling to spark discussion on a variety of issues faced by migrants. The story allowed participants to separate themselves from their own experience to consider other points of view. This exercise allowed migrants to work through and discuss some of their own internal conflicts and the obstacles involved in migration, but also served as a means of giving local Spanish people a glimpse into migrant life and allowing for communication between the two groups. While several participants had strong opinions, because the discussion was focused on a story, it did not become too personal or create any larger conflicts.
How telling the story facilitates learning so that it is not only fun for the participants:
The two facilitators were very impressed by the success of storytelling as a pedagogical tool. They are interested in learning more storytelling methods and using storytelling in their work with adults and young people.

**Evaluation**

**Impact:**
The La Xixa team reports that learners were eager to discuss the topics touched on during the story. Some even said that the experience made them question long-held beliefs.

**Strengths:**
The telling of a story as a group serves as a dramatic pretext for the discussion of the challenges of the migration process. Migrants have the chance not only to reflect on their own experience but to exchange with others and form new connections.

**Weaknesses:**
While the contribution of participants to the storytelling process is central to the success of this practice; variations in participant involvement could also influence the depth of the discussions sparked.

**Recommended books and resources for further information**
The methodology used for this activity was taken from the book Mapping Drama by Allan Owens and Keith Barber.

**Personal data about the presenter of the good practice**
- Name of the storyteller: Meritxell Martínez
- Email: laxixateatre@gmail.com
Tell for the future - Sweden

**Background**

**Target group:**
About fifteen survivors from the Holocaust and about fifteen youngsters aged 15 – 28 years, grandchildren of other survivors.

**Needs – context:**
Six million Jews were wiped out during the Holocaust. A few survivors are still there and can tell their memories about it, but not for long. Would it be possible to work with these old people and youngsters together, and to let the elderly's stories move on orally?

And would it perhaps be possible for young people to orally tell these stories in schools? This was the question the Swedish agency Living History Forum asked themselves when they initiated a pilot project “Tell for the future.”

**Objectives:**
To investigate if it is possible to transfer the stories from the Holocaust survivor to a group of young people from the so-called third generation, and encourage them in turn to tell the same stories, in their own way.

**Detailed description**

**Activities-methodology:**
We began by familiarising the participants with the basic forms of storytelling: What is a story, how do you create internal images, how to communicate with your listeners. The material was partly traditional stories and also life stories based on interviews by the counterparty - old vs. young. We soon realised that the elderly had huge expectations of the young people and that we must handle this. The youth would not be mouthpieces for the elderly. They needed to tell the stories based on what they wanted themselves and could accommodate.

We also discovered that the elderly were totally unsentimental about their material and that they had confidence in us as leaders when we were just technical, analysing their storytelling, editing stories and so on. It was to be a discussion that lasted throughout the three long year project on how knowledge can be managed in a story.

When the older people adopted a lecturing style and perhaps somewhat rhetorical, we tried to show a different way. To view memories as a story in a visual way so that listeners perceive something, experiencing emotions and draw their own conclusions. We also wanted to get the elderly to understand that young people would never be able to capture all of the elderly’s experience and knowledge, could not reproduce their experiences across its width, but there was something else that was possible. Together we found out a method for collecting stories.

A meeting always began with playful warm-up exercises where we both wanted to create a physical approach to each other, and a joviality and laughter that could counterbalance some of the weight of the material to be processed. The elderly struggled to accept this approach at the beginning.

Then, we made an inventory of possible topics that we would work with. We made lists of themes, such as music, signs, potatoes, railway carriages, toys, farewells, etc. A theme would work as a fishing hook, something used to search memory fragments. Subsequently, the youth choose the theme that they wanted to immerse themselves in.

Then the elderly positioned themselves on different places in the room. The young people moved from person to person to that particular theme/old person they had chosen. It could be water, snow, tracks, fire, lice, explosion, green, etc. We collected large amounts of anecdotes, each of which spoke about racism, survival strategies, absurd laws of the Nazis, displacement of normal human feelings etc.

Eventually, the youth chose which story they truly wanted to immerse themselves in. They had to do more interviews, go deeper, and try to get exact details on environments and people, all of which to visualise the course of events. We had continued exercises in storytelling. We worked on the editing of the stories. Finally, we could have a first oral storytelling performance when the youth appeared before the older ones to tell their own stories. It was a remarkable moment! To see how the older people lived up, were respected, and there was hope for the whole project. Some of them found that their stories were told better by the youngsters than by themselves.

From here, we prepared for a public performance. The young-
sters performed at Fabula’s Storytelling Café and they also soon became invited to tell for the Jewish Community, and the events surrounding the Holocaust memorial. After that the group, elderly and youngsters together, started a programme for schools telling about the Holocaust.

**Partners involved:**

**Problems tackled:**
We had a number of factors to consider in the beginning of the project. First of all it was the burden and enormous weight of the material, memories of the survivors - how would the youth be able to deal with it, during the time we were going to work on this. The second was how to manage a group consisting of two such diverse groups: survivors who were seventy-eighty years old, and the young people who were aged between fifteen and twenty-eight. The third was, how could we be teachers and talk about the technical details of the narration and editing of stories - when dealing with the experiences of mass murder?

Fortunately, we had an extremely farsighted producer who was careful to call this an experiment, we would try out. She also gave us important support in meetings with the elderly, some of which were marked by trauma that affected the process.

**Involvement of the storyteller and techniques applied:**
In this project storytelling was the main content and method.

**Type of story:**
Life stories

**Timescale:**
There were two different groups. Each of them met about 15 times during one and a half year between 2006 and 2009.

**Special attention to the role of storytelling**
Through life stories people communicate about difficult situations, there’s a better mutual understanding.

**Evaluation**
Very careful evaluation was made by Living History Forum. The whole process was recorded. The participant also, as a group, regularly met a psychiatrist.

**Impact:**
A group of young people still tell stories in the schools about the holocaust and in a living moment get the history alive for a lot of other young people.

**Strengths:**
It worked so well at the end regarding the sensitive nature of the subject matter. It still has impact, without project money.

**Weaknesses:**
Such a project is not easy to realise because it takes a lot of time and hard work and also a good infrastructure to do it.

**Recommended books and resources for further information**

http://www.levandehistoria.se/projekt/berattaforframtiden
http://www.levandehistoria.se/node/2286
Personal data about the presenter of the good practice
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Background

‘Migrants crossing borders’ was a three-year intercultural storytelling programme in Lelystad, a ‘new town’, situated on the bottom of the former Zuiderzee. Apart from babies born in Lelystad, all inhabitants settling from 1967 onwards can be considered newcomers / migrants. These migrants can be autochthonous people coming from surrounding provinces, but are mainly coming from the heterogeneous multicultural groups from the Randstad (conurbation in the Netherlands).

80 nationalities are represented in the city. The project was initiated by the city council and the city library and was part of a broader (national) plan to promote libraries as ‘meeting places’.

Target group:
The project targeted all adults living in the different neighbourhoods of the city. Special efforts were made to reach special needs groups’ e.g. illiterate mothers and grandmothers taking classes in Dutch language and culture in the school of their children or grandchildren. The regional Centre for Development Cooperation (CDC), the Lelystad Association for Refugees and other Newcomers (VVNL) and personal networks played an important role in reaching inhabitants of foreign origin. Also pupils from the primary schools were a special target. Working with school children helped reaching families with a foreign background.

Objectives:
• To strengthen social cohesion among the inhabitants
• To strengthen the identity of inhabitants as citizens of Lelystad and create a sense of belonging
• To enhance the role of the public library in society

Detailed description

Activities:
Storytelling circles
The first set of activities took place in the neighbourhoods: inviting people to storytelling circles in private homes. Inhabitants could opt for one of three roles: host(ess), visitor/listener and visitor/storyteller. The host(ess) invited some local people and the facilitators also invited people who had expressed their interest in participating. The meetings were led by experienced storytellers in order to create an atmosphere of trust and openness. The circle groups were heterogeneous: men and women, young and old(er), migrants with a Dutch background and migrants from abroad. This enabled those present to informally meet with persons from a completely different background, and hear parts of their biographies. Leading questions to guide the local people for their stories were: “Where do you come from? How did you end up in Lelystad? Do you feel at home here? What did you do to make Lelystad your home? Can you tell us an anecdotal story about your place or country of origin, or about your first months or years in Lelystad, or about your ramblings before settling here?

After the phase of storytelling circles in private homes, similar meetings in community halls, the library, the New Land Heritage Centre and two care centres for the aged were arranged. These meetings still were informal, but stories could be recorded on video for the project website bringing news about the programme, a calendar of events, and full stories, either on video film or in written form.
Primary schools were also offered the opportunity to devote a number of language or history lessons to ‘The Story of Lelystad’ in upper primary classes. For this purpose a plan of lessons was prepared. Alternatively, this course for pupils could be given as an after-school activity in a neighbouring community hall. Basic idea was to coach pupils to interview their parents using the programme’s questions. In school they then shared these migration stories. The lesson would end with a storytelling performance by selected children.

Courses
Two evening courses in storytelling for adults were organised, one in the library and one organised jointly with the Centre for Development Cooperation (CDC), a participant mentioned below. Also in the primary schools storytelling courses were set up.

The storytelling train
During the last seven weeks of action, ending 28th October, an old workmen’s canteen on wheels from the 1960s, pulled through the streets by an ancient tractor, advertised the programme in seven main neighbourhoods. The canteen was refurbished outside and inside and fitted out with comfortable benches. People could enter or sit outside in the shade and tell their story to one of the team. The train would be parked for two afternoons a week on the parking place near a supermarket, near a community hall or near an old person’s home.

The library
The library and its staff played a central role. Staff mounted book exhibitions about Lelystad, storytelling, and about the main countries of origin of migrants from abroad. They also prepared accompanying reading lists, helped arranging storytelling events in the library, enlisted the co-operation of the local association ‘Friends of the Library’, built up the theatre in one of the library halls, made posters and leaflets, and published events. In 2006 the concluding storytelling festival took place in the public library. Over 25 storytellers participated in a flashing show stage-managed by the nationally known storyteller and festival organiser Anne van Delft from Amsterdam.

Partners involved:
The project was led by a coordinating team and facilitated by experienced storytellers. The project team invited some agencies to join as participants in the programme: the New Land Heritage Centre (NLHC), the regional door-to-door newspaper FlevoPost, the regional Centre for Development Cooperation (CDC) based in the town, and the local Video and Film Club FlevoLacus. Besides the FlevoPost as our main participant in the media world, a range of other media were kept informed.
Involvement of storytellers:
The project was facilitated by experienced storytellers.

Techniques applied/used (Cfr. Activities):
Storytelling circles
The library

Timescale:
‘Migrants crossing borders’ was a three-year intercultural storytelling programme.

Special attention to the role of storytelling
The storytelling project encouraged participants to meet on a deeper level, certainly during the first phase of storytelling circles. Quite a number of participants felt drawn out of their loneliness by this project. Telling their own story in a secure environment reassured them of their value as a person. In addition, storytelling had widened the opportunities for meeting with others, and for voluntary work.

Organisers certainly feel that different groups of participants in the project have exercised and improved their intercultural communicative competences at different levels:
• Personal characteristics and skills needed in meeting the other and accepting the other as a partner in communication
• Taking into account each other’s need of autonomy, intimacy, …
• The mutual trust and the willingness to support one another.

Evaluation

Influence (impact) on learners:
Through the project the library has reaffirmed its position as a guardian and facilitator of storytelling, at least for a certain period. It has done this by mounting exhibitions, preparing reading lists on relevant subjects, by offering courses in storytelling and by staging performances by storytellers and musicians. The performances in the library, all in all some twenty of different kinds, were rated as having a high artistic quality.

The main unintended outcomes have been: a striking growth of the number of amateur-storytellers continuing with telling stories after the end of the three-year period described; a strengthening of the facilitating structure for storytelling in Lelystad and, a growth in the number of local organisers inviting storytellers to perform their art. Two ladies formed a group ‘Women from Abroad for Storytelling’.

Strengths:
With new members in the storytelling circle, the local foundation felt strong enough to apply for funds: six members are carrying out training programmes in primary schools, leading to the presentation of an annual Golden Storytelling Pass to ‘the best pupil-storyteller’ of the year. Storytelling activities in Lelystad are now reported in the specialised national magazine for storytellers ‘Vertel eens…’ appearing four to six times per year since 2006. The goals formulated in the plan linked oral history to ‘strengthening the identity of inhabitants as citizens of Lelystad’. The team agrees that the project certainly has widened and deepened inhabitants’ perception of different aspects of their own town, of its history and of the mixed and interesting population they are part of.

Weaknesses:
We are lacking information on the project to describe the eventual weaknesses about the good practice

Personal data about the presenter of the good practice

Tom Draisma & Corine Kistemaker
Mail address: improvisie@planet.nl
Openstorytellers - United Kingdom

**Background**

Openstorytellers is a charity which seeks to empower and include people who are marginalised as a result of intellectual and communication difficulties, through the use of story. We use literature, legends and personal stories to help people gain confidence, have a stake in the culture and feel inspired.

**Group line-up / Target group:**
We place people with the highest support needs at the centre of our work – these are children and adults who have profound and multiple disabilities, who communicate nonverbally, and who are the most excluded population in our societies. We believe that everyone has a story to tell, that everyone can take part in the telling of a story, and that storytelling is not just for the verbally gifted.

**Preparation:**
Given the nature of the target group, special needs and requirements have to be taken into account when setting up the workshop room.

**Objectives:**
We emphasise telling with rather than telling to; it is easy to go in and entertain people and much more difficult to enable them to actively participate in creating the story.

**Context of the workshop:**
This is an inclusive course in community storytelling for people with learning and communication difficulties. The course is taught from the handbook Learning to Tell: a Handbook for Inclusive Storytelling (Nicola Grove), which provides guidance on running an inclusive group, activities to develop storytelling skills (recall, sequencing, expression of feelings, language skills, rhetorical skills); opportunities for recording personal narratives, and suggested themes to address during the year such as beginnings, seasonal stories, group formation (using epics such as the Knights of the Round Table, Finn McCool, Monkey tales), facing challenges (hero tales); and learning about different story genres.

**Detailed description**

**Methodology:**
This is a strategic approach which enables children and adults with very high support needs/profound disabilities to engage in sharing stories of their own experiences. The techniques involve: finding a “reportable” event that is enough of a departure from routine to be significant and memorable (this is much harder than you might think); recalling the event together and planning the person’s contribution (e.g. use of voice, words, signs, gestures, VOCA, facial expression, props). The co-narrator takes responsibility for the trajectory of the story, and creates opportunities for the person to join in. We find the most difficult problem is that the default mode of eliciting information is questioning, which kills the process of storytelling stone dead. Questions are permitted in the first phase of the programme, the story gathering and rehearsal, but in the act of telling we use prompts and encourage sentence completion and imitation. We also train active listeners – all too often listening is seen as passive and silent, whereas we encourage people to respond enthusiastically, thus motivating the teller.

**Problems tackled:**
These are people with varying degrees of language capabilities. Storytelling might not seem the obvious choice, but it is always surprising how much joy everybody finds in communicating. Due to verbal limitations, a lot of body language comes into play, as well as meaningful silences, miming, etc. The results are often surprising, and previously uncommunicative individuals can reveal themselves as born showmen.

**Involvement of the storyteller and techniques applied:**
The involvement of the storyteller in this context is obviously very needs-specific; we speak of a co-narrator/facilitator who helps and guides people along all stages of the process, from identifying episodes to working and finally performing a story. The most important aspect of the storyteller’s job here is to communicate enthusiasm, to encourage people to come out of themselves and share.

**Type of story:**
Literature, legends and personal stories

**Timescale:**
This tends to vary, but of course the more time we can spend with any given group, the deeper the work will be. For this kind of groups, it is recommended to have at least a day to work
together, so that trust can be established and the facilitator doesn’t feel rushed towards an aim to achieve. The most important element in this approach is playfulness, and all material should be developed in this spirit.

**Evaluation**

**Impact:**
Sarah is a girl with Down syndrome and a severe hearing impairment, which isolates her somewhat from her peers. Through story-sharing she has begun to actively recall and narrate things that have happened at home and at school, a development which was totally new for her. She uses the iPad to record events and has become skilled at using it. She was able to participate in her annual review by telling a story of how she had coped with a challenge. One of the members of the panel reported that this was the best example she had seen of a contribution to a review.

Peter has a severe visual impairment. He became confident in walking around the library with some support and frequently addressed library staff and asked questions. Support staff were surprised that we managed to keep him alert and interested for 2 hours. They said ‘Peter always asks when he is coming to the group. He really enjoys it. We never thought of taking him to the library before because of his blindness’. Peter also developed a great awareness of rhythm and rhyme through studying the language of Shakespeare and the ballads of Robin Hood. He became friendly with peer mentor B which led to them arranging meetings after the course finished.

Andrew was non-verbal and had very limited communication skills. He progressed from not coming through the door to sitting in a group circle, passing around objects within the group and joining in with group sound effects. In the last session his carer said ‘In all my years of knowing Andrew, I have never seen him join in like this’.

**Strengths:**
Stories draw people in; they engage even the most impaired participants in surprising ways. We have found this time and time again. Well-known stories provide a safe frame for people not used to communicate in this way. The listening aspect always comes first; people listen to story being told, and they are enchanted, this is half the battle won, now they are eager to have a go at it themselves.

**Weaknesses:**
Of course, not all stories are accessible for this group. They need to be very simple, preferably well-known. When it comes to episodes from their own lives, they are generally fairly simple anecdotes, no complicated plots or gripping tales. But this is where this weakness, the relative lack of content, can be turned into a strength. As long as the delivery holds enough enthusiasm or even passion, the experience of listening to these simple tales can be highly rewarding for any listener, and real emotion comes through, these are the golden nugget-moments.

**Personal data about the presenter of the good practice**

www.openstorytellers.org.uk
**Good Practices Aiming at the Improvement of Language Skills**

**The Doll of Sorrows - Belgium**

**Background**

*Target group:* Adults, mostly highly schooled, who are learning Dutch. They are completing the highest level possible at CVO Leuven-Landen. It concerns a writing class at Campus Landen.

*Needs – context:* It is a version of a story with Arabic roots namely “The patience Stone or Patience knife”. One of the 1001 stories. The training aims at developing the writing skills of the participants. The participants have already been through 9 levels of Dutch practice. It concerns a refinement of their writing-skills.

*Learning goals of that level are:*  
- the learners have to be able to write an informative text  
- the learners are able to evaluate.  

According to the Common European Framework of Reference language profiles, learners who accomplish learning a foreign language must be able to write a fluent, illustrative, narrative text.

*Objectives:*  
The main goal is the improvement of the writing skills in Dutch of the learners but this practice includes an exercise on listening and speaking in Dutch as well.

**Detailed description**

*Activities-methodology:*  
At first, the storyteller tells a story that is called The Doll of Sorrows. The storyteller does not give the title or the end of the story away. In fact, the storyteller stops the story at a very crucial, mysterious part, with a “cliff-hanger” of an image. This image is very open and broad. This is a storytelling methodology.  

As the learners do not know the story will be interrupted, this comes as a surprise. They are in suspense to find out the ending. Then, the storyteller triggers them with questions like where, why and how would the story end. With these concrete questions, the learners are motivated to find an ending themselves. They get immediately to work to write it. The storyteller motivates them by explaining they’ll have time to write the ending first, then time to tell their ending and then they will have the original ending. At the end of the course there is a written and oral evaluation.

*Partners involved:*  
There were no partners involved; the storyteller is one of the teachers of the language school.

*Problems tackled:*  
One of the problems was timing. We could not start to tell the story in the beginning of the course. This concerns an evening course, people are at work during the day and some of them cannot get in time to the school. Because everybody had to hear the story first, we had to wait for 30 minutes before we could tell the story. So we were sure that everybody would be able to listen to the story. We had 2.5 hours instead of 3 hours what would have been much more relaxed for the storyteller and the learners. As you will see, we had no flexibility with the time scale. We asked a lot of the learners. It was a very intensive course for them.
Involvement of the storyteller and techniques applied:
The storyteller came to the writing class. The learners did not know there would be a storyteller. They were surprised and eager to listen. It concerns a high level class, so the storyteller spoke in a very nice and rich Dutch language. The learners could hear the sound and the rhythm of the Dutch language in the story. They were confronted with refined vocabulary that is enriching for them. The storyteller builds up images, scene after scene. This is a storytelling technique that the listeners can hear, see, taste, feel and sniff the story, step by step. The audience gets involved in the story. Of course, many of the learners were not used to creating an ending to a story. But the storyteller gave them the images, the tools, so they could get on in every direction in an easier way. The storyteller used the technique of suspense. Everybody wanted to know the very ending but first they had to write their own ending and listen to the other endings. The storyteller created as well an atmosphere of confidence, by telling that every ending is worthy to hear and tell, because there is no good or bad ending.

Special attention to the role of storytelling
This was a good practice based on storytelling. The learners had to concentrate in Dutch from the beginning until the end. It was for them a challenge to create an original ending, to write in another language and to tell it in this other language. It was also a challenge but because of the storytelling, it was not a burden. They were all in the flow of the story, and they would tell on. The story asks it. They get over the difficulties of the language because of the story and storytelling activity itself.

Evaluation

Impact:
The evaluation by the learners was very positive. They liked it very much.

Strengths:
This was more than a language course. The content of the story works as well. They got home with such a lot of endings. The motivation was high to create a nice story.

Weaknesses:
This kind of storytelling activity requires a motivated group of learners. It was an activity for people who are eager to learn and have no difficulties with writing. It might be more difficult with learners who are obliged to learn Dutch and not motivated. In fact we should try. Now, we knew that the learners would like the activity. They are highly schooled. They have already been to the Storytelling Festival at Alden Biesen. They knew the context of storytelling.

Personal data about the presenter of the good practice

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Storytelling Techniques in a Language Course for Adults

Belgium

**Background**

**Target group:**
Adults of the seventh level, concerning a conversation class at the language school CVO Leuven-Landen

**Needs – context:**
The training is aimed at developing the oral skills of the participants. The participants have already been through 6 levels of Dutch practice. Its goal is to refine their oral skills. Learning goals of that level are:

- the learner can follow the main idea in narrative texts.
- the learner can form a personal opinion about what he hears.
- the learner can report on a situation concerning a narrative text;
- the learner can give a summary of a narrative text he has been listening to;
- the learner can express his wishes, feelings, needs and ask for the wishes, feelings and needs of his partner;
- the learner can ask for the opinion of his partner and can express his own opinion or point of view in a discussion or exchange of opinions.

**Objectives:**
The main goal is to improve the oral skills in the target language of the students but this practice also involves a listening exercise in Dutch.

**Detailed description**

**Activities-methodology:**

*First story telling activity*
The storyteller tells a story from 1001 Nights. It is a story in which the two main characters, Char en Cher, are initially friends, but they become antagonists. The theme of the story is the good and the bad, and whether one should take revenge or not. The storyteller does not give the ending away and stops the story on a decisive moment; Cher who has suffered extremely because Char has treated him so badly finally has the power to take revenge on Char. The storyteller describes this moment and asks the audience what they think Cher will do next.

The class is divided in small groups and the students discuss how they think the story will end. Each group gives its version of the story's end. The students listen to each other's endings. Then the storyteller gives the real ending. All students together discuss which group was closest to the real ending. Then the storyteller asks the students whether they think it is a good ending or not (and evidently why they think so).

*Second story telling activity*
The storyteller has brought some materials such as pieces of fabric, figurines, buttons, little sticks, little eyes, and more recycled materials or craft material.

The storyteller takes a piece of fabric and explains that every story has its hero. She shows the fabric and asks the audience who this hero could be. The students give answers and they agree on a new main character for a new story.

The storyteller keeps asking questions to the audience. Where does the hero live? Which problem does the hero have? With every question, she shows another piece of material. She puts the material on a storyteller string. This is just a piece of string that is being put on the floor in the form of a circle. Thus the story is being visualised by the string and the pieces of different materials that represent the different elements of the story. The story then is being built systematically together with the audience by means of questions and answers. The storyteller also allocates a certain rhythm to some of the answers of the audience, and this rhythm will be accompanied by a movement. Thus the story becomes a game of movement and language. For example, ‘The prince dives, and swims, and he swims and dives. And dives. And swims.’ At the same time, the students imitate the movements of swimming and diving. This gives the exercise a very jolly and playful touch.

*Third storytelling activity*
The students are being divided in small groups and each group receives a package with different materials. The package is wrapped up by means of a string. The string is the storytelling string. The group starts by putting the string on the floor. It can be put down in a circle or in one straight line. The group can use the material three-dimensionally, by putting the material in an
upward position. They start building their own story using the structure of a story and standard phrases, such as:
Once upon a time...
But one day...
And then...
Only when...
Unfortunately...
Fortunately there was...
And they lived long and happy ever after...

The storyteller goes around and helps the groups if necessary. The material will invite the students to come up with their own story. The building of a story will take about 15 minutes. The students listen to and watch each other’s story.

**Partners involved:**
There is no partner involved, the storyteller was one of the teachers of the language school.

**Problems tackled:**
Some learners arrived late and missed the storytelling part in the beginning. They might have felt uneasy later on. The storyteller expected the learners having difficulties in creating stories but it actually was no problem at all. Since the class was divided into small groups and time was running they had no choice but to concentrate and participate. The learners did their best to create stories. However, it can be expected that some students might say they have no story to tell. The storyteller has a good medicine for this ailment: as it is a multicultural learning class, the storyteller can refer to each student’s cultural background. The own culture is a source of inspiration to start a story. By involving their own culture in this activity, the storyteller can take away some anxiety about telling a story.

**Involvement of the storyteller and techniques applied:**
In this practical example, different types of storytelling techniques are being used.
1. The storytelling string as guidance for the story to be invented
2. The structure of a story. Storytellers use this structure to build a story
3. There is “colour” in every story. Every storyteller flavours his story with taste, smell, colour, sound. The storyteller explicitly asks to weave these elements into the story. She refers to the culture of the students and asks them to add the colours, tastes, smells and sounds of their own culture in the story. This brings us to another technique: each storyteller brings “emotion” in his story by connecting himself to the story. He integrates his own memories of colours, smells, tastes and sounds in the story. As the students are given the instruction to tell the story aloud in 10 minutes and to flavour it by using all these elements connected to their own culture while they are moving around and using the whole classroom space, they add ‘colour’ and ‘emotion’ to the story.
4. The storyteller has actively involved the students in telling stories by having them make some movements, by having them say some words in a certain rhythm. This is another storytelling technique to hold the audience’s attention and makes them do something active in a part of the story. While the students are preparing their own stories, the storyteller suggests to the students to make their fellow stu-
dents do something active while they are telling the story, for example by having them repeat a small rhyme they have made or by making them repeat some movements.

**Evaluation**

**Impact:**
As a conclusion we evaluated the evening together with the learners. They were absolutely excited about the activities. Many learners were interested by the multicultural background of the stories. One learner was immediately involved as he understood the story was situated in the desert. All learners participated actively; they had a good laugh and respected each other’s stories.

**Strengths:**
The first activity (discussion about the ending of the story) is a very suited exercise: learners have no problems to understand the story and the activity, they found different endings. The second activity (to tell a story by materials according to a well-defined structure) is a very efficient way to help people tell. Everybody participated. The learners created funny and emotional stories, about a dog without a tail who could sing like Whitney Houston, about an angry magician who had a chicken with golden eggs and found out one day she had stopped laying eggs, etc.

**Weaknesses:**
The only weakness is the timing. Some people arrived late and disrupted the activities.

**Personal data about the presenter of the good practice**

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**Special attention to the role of storytelling**

As stated above the storyteller started the class by telling a story. The learners were involved in the story and therefore had no problem to start the first oral exercise. Cultural background and individual characters played an important role in the discussions by the learners. For the second activity the storyteller first told a story by using recycling material. The storyteller invited the learners to help to create the story according to the structure we described above. This structure was written on the blackboard. First the learners did the exercise together guided by the storyteller. Then they had to work in small groups and do the same activity with other recycling materials. Now they had to create a new story themselves. Since they already did it together they created the story quite easily.
**Background**

**Target group:**
Adult foreigners, who came to live in Bulgaria (Arabs, Koreans, West Europeans, etc.) Some of them have just several years to retirement, others are retired.

**Context / needs:**
For all participants the life in Bulgaria is something new. They are remote from their native environments, relatives and style of life with weak knowledge of the Bulgarian traditions and Bulgarian language. They need to improve their skills to communicate in different (very often - specific Bulgarian) circumstances and with the people of their closest community (in the city they live, at the market place, on the street, with the neighbours and so on). Along with the refinement of their oral language skills they need also to better understand the Bulgarian style of life, habits, traditions and way of thinking.

**Objectives:**
- to improve the oral skills in Bulgarian
- to improve the communication skills in Bulgarian
- to increase awareness of adult participants of diversity

**Detailed description**

**Activities & Methodology:**
The stories are logically embedded in each of the “learning actions”.
The introductory part of the training session began with a story told by the trainer. The story is carefully selected with the aim of leading the participants to the topic going to be discussed. It concerns the subjectivity in the perception of people and their behaviour. It also reveals opportunities for development of tolerance towards the diversity and for finding different perspectives. The story is attractive enough and provides a good start to a common discussion with the participants on the topic. The trainer carefully gives the directions of the discussion, inviting participants to share:

- similar situations with perceptions of people towards each other in situations of communication and other social interactions related to the differences in appearance and behaviour;
- ways, in which we can regulate our own behaviour, so as to avoid the manifestations of bias and one-sided perceptions of people and events in our lives.

Each participant is asked to tell a short story in Bulgarian, presenting his experience related to the diversity issues and surprise of Bulgarian habits, way of thinking or style of living. In order to motivate trainees to start the discussion, as well as to give them more time to think about their own story, the trainer starts to tell comical stories from real life, happened on the street, at the market, etc. The stories, presented by the trainers, show to the participants that in some cases limits of language and communication skills could make them just to laugh, but in other cases it could become even dangerous. After the trainer has presented real life stories, participants already had the courage to present their own stories in the Bulgarian language. Along with the understanding that they could experience certain problems with the language, the misunderstanding in general and, in particular, based on the diversity, the participants searched co-operatively for appropriate solutions on such situations.

During the next stage of the session, the trainer gives to each participant a set of Bulgarian words and the trainee is asked to think about a story and tell it in a specific situation using the given words. Next, each participant is asked to present his story in front of the whole group. The trainer asks participants to group themselves into small teams of 3 to 4 persons. The teams should choose the real life situation (shopping on the market, travelling by public or private transport, etc.) in which they could fall. Then, the teams think about several stories which could happen in such a situation. The teams discuss in Bulgarian how to present the stories to the other teams. At the end, each team tells its stories in front of the others. Other teams shared their opinion on each story and discuss what the story really shows and how it could be changed.

**Partners involved:**
There were no partners involved. The trainers played the role of the storyteller.

**Issues, related to the story:**
“Ice breaking” is the most common problem appearing in the beginning of the training. It is understandable because the participants are not familiar with each other, they are not fully aware of the details of the training scenario. That is why often
they are silent and start to tell their stories timidly. However, after the first two or three stories told by the participants and the trainer, and due to the very positive atmosphere, this problem is overcome. The “timing” is also a problem. When the learners became very interested and deeply involved in the theme, it was difficult to stop them working on it and to ask them to present to others. In addition, when they start presenting, most of the teams are not kept close to the timeframe.

Involvement of storytellers & techniques applied/used:
As it was mentioned above, the stories are the core around which the entire training is delivered. The storytelling techniques were applied by the trainer of the class.

Timescale:
5 minutes: the trainer presents the starting story.
5 – 10 minutes: the trainer starts the discussion and tells the real life stories.
1 hour: trainees tell their real life stories.
5 - 10 minutes: each trainee thinks about the story with given words in Bulgarian.
30 minutes: each trainee tells his story with given words in Bulgarian in front of the whole group.
2 hours: Split the trainees into teams and working on stories
1 hour: Each team tells his story in front of other teams.
30 minutes: Other teams discuss each story and propose some changes.

Special attention to the role of storytelling

The storytelling is a key to the success of the training, because the stories help to overcome the first main problem of trainees - their uncertainty in speaking Bulgarian language. Put in a situation to think on their stories, the trainees realise the importance of the language and communication skills. Next, working cooperatively with others helps them to become more confident as other people can understand them. Finally, presenting their results to other teams makes participants believe that they are able to express themselves in Bulgarian language, so others understand them and they understand others.

Evaluation

Influence (impact) on learners:
The final evaluation of the training was very positive. The learners shared that they liked the storytelling exercises very much.

Strengths:
This was more than a course. It was mutual familiarising and understanding through sharing of stories.

Weaknesses:
The involvement of the trainees into the storytelling activity was a problem for some of them in the beginning. If there are more such participants in one and the same group, it could become very difficult for the trainer to fulfil successfully objectives of the training.

Personal data about the presenter of the good practice

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Art Integrate - Finland

**Background**

**Target group:**
Artists representing Finnish and multi-cultural groups and people with multi-cultural background.

**Needs – context:**
The project began in Turku, Finland in 2012 and was initiated by Annamari Karjalainen who worked at “Art Promotion”1. Since 2012, the project has continued and is now active in other parts of Finland with funding from the European Union and the Finnish Arts Councils.

**Objectives:**
- To create a performance with artists from different cultural backgrounds based on personal stories
- Using story circles as a main method to tell stories independently of the language skills present

**Detailed description**

**Activities:**
Overall, the project can be described as having three core phases. Firstly, the artists from different cultural backgrounds began to work and collaborate together, using the various artists’ expression as the starting point for story-based activities focused on working with memory and recalling personal stories. They used the workshop setting as a working “platform”. The second phase of the project focused on performances within the workshops and finally, building on the work of the previous two phases, the group began storytelling circles that were open to other adults from minority backgrounds.

**Methodology:**
The main method of interest for Sheherazade was the storytelling circle however it is worth noting that the project used variety of creative methods throughout to achieve its objectives. The storytelling circle is understood as a very old interaction tool, the structure is familiar to everyone. All the participants are equal in a storytelling circle. It was used for different memory maps to help the participants find stories in their own background, for example a map of a journey you made, a map of a favourite place, and a map of the city. Based on the maps coupled with the use of some items and objects, the participants could find and tell a story.

**Partners involved:**
The project was initiated by Annamari Karjalainen working with the Turku City Theatre, Western Regional Dance Centre, Turku Adult Education and the City of Turku immigrant and multicultural services.

**Problems tackled:**
Personal stories were the main focus of the project, but traditional stories were also told, especially when the participants used their own mother tongue and had difficulty telling about their background. It was important to stay away from therapy.

**Involvement of the storyteller and techniques applied:**
Storytellers were involved as workshop leaders and artists.

**Special attention to the role of storytelling**
How the story contributes to achieving the goals of the training: Personal stories told were the main thread throughout the whole project. The stories were closely related to method devel-
opment, the content of the performance and the performance expression. They experienced, through the storytelling circles, that it was possible to tell their own story drawing from their background and in doing so improved their Finnish language skills. The project received feedback like, “in the years I have lived in Finland, I have never talked so much Finnish as now”.

**How telling the story facilitates learning so that it is not only fun for the participants:**
“The storytelling circles provoke a democratic way of being, you have to listen and meet and in this the language has impact.”

**Evaluation**

The main idea was to use art and storytelling in work against racism and prejudices. To see a person in the storytelling circle as another human being, not as a member of some ethnic group, was successful. It gave participants a very important experience of communication – and also in a new language.

**Impact:**
The whole training process followed the impulses and motivation of participants. The workshop method was developed and evolved based on the feedback from the learners.

**Strengths:**
Personal impact through stories was a big support both in learning a new language and in supporting communication.

**Weaknesses:**
The learners with less language skills had interpreters, but they were often a hindrance in the communication process.

**Personal data about the presenter of the good practice**

Annamari Karjalainen
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**Background**

**Target group:**
Traveller women from Dublin City, Ireland.

**Context:**
The Finglas Traveller Development Group in conjunction with Tolka Area Partnership published a booklet documenting the lives of the Travellers in a traditional Barrel Top Wagon, titled ‘Stories of Life in a Wagon’. The booklet was the culmination of the outputs of this training programme. For information purposes, Irish Travellers are people with a separate identity, culture and history living a nomadic lifestyle in Ireland and represent approximately 2% of the national population. Through the social inclusion work of Tolka Area Partnership, they initiated a training programme for traveller women to capture their rich tradition and ties with folklore. Irish Storyteller, Aideen McBride, was enlisted to facilitate an 8 week training workshop, from which the booklet was published.

**Objectives :**
The aim of this project was to:
- work with local Traveller women to collect their stories and to preserve their customs and culture
- increase and improve their oral communication skills
- improve their self-confidence and give them a voice

**Detailed description**

**Activities:**
Activities undertaken included some initial ice-breakers. However, because of the nature of this group of women, who have been marginalised traditionally in Irish society, it was difficult to get them to open up in the group setting initially. In order to get them to share their stories, the facilitator told some stories she knew from Traveller folklore. This encouraged the women who had heard these stories to share when they had heard it and other stories they remembered from their childhood. As the women shared their stories, the facilitator discreetly introduced them to issues such as pitch, tone and volume when telling a story. As the women collected their stories and decided which would be the best to include in the published booklet, they were growing in confidence within the group, and becoming more eager to tell their own stories with every session.

**Methodology:**
The group met informally, one or two days per week, for 8 weeks. Aideen spent her time in residency with the group collecting stories and introducing storytelling techniques to encourage the women to share their stories and tell stories that were told to them as children. The group swapped stories and songs that were indigenous to their life in a Barrel Top Wagon. At the same time as participants were telling their stories, they were also learning about how to tell stories, through workshops on voice, pitch, tone and rhythm. The new skills they were learning increased their confidence when telling stories, so that by week 4, participants were happy to offer their own stories, instead of having to be probed and encouraged by the facilitator.

**Partners involved:**
The group comprised of 10 Traveller women who were from the greater Finglas area of Dublin North. The training programme was supported by the Finglas Traveller Development Group and Tolka Area Partnership and involved a professional storyteller as the facilitator.

**Issues, related to the story:**
The main challenge faced upon commencement of this programme was getting women to share and talk together. Traditionally Traveller women are very private individuals so encouraging the women to open up and talk together was difficult at first. Ice-breakers such as memory games were quite ineffective. Instead the facilitator told her own stories, and this finally got the women to start talking.

Involvement of storytellers: The facilitator, Aideen McBride, was a professional Storyteller, and used her experience to get the participants to start sharing their own stories and learning the techniques to communicate their stories effectively. The participants wanted to ensure that their culture and heritage was preserved and portrayed in a fitting way and for this reason learning how to present their stories was very important to these women.

**Type of the story:**
Life stories and stories from Traveller tradition and folklore.

**Timescale:**
The project took place over an eight week period comprising informal storytelling workshops.
Special attention to the role of storytelling

How does the storytelling act address the aims of the learning? The informal and flexible nature of storytelling put participants at ease and gradually eliminated the initial barriers to communication and group engagement such as shyness, lack of confidence, mistrust etc. The use of storytelling greatly aided the training objectives as it allowed the group to share and swap stories and to encourage them to take ownership of the stories and the portrayal of their heritage and culture.

How will the Storytelling act facilitate learning, cannot be just entertaining?
In this workshop series, the techniques associated with storytelling were integrated throughout the eight week programme. Storytelling exercises were used as tools to facilitate capacity building and increase self-confidence amongst learners.

Evaluation

Influence (impact) on learners:
The feedback from learners was very positive and the results of their storytelling activities were documented in a booklet and published for others to access and read.

Strengths:
Throughout this programme, storytelling was instrumental in empowering these marginalised women to promote a more positive attitude towards Traveller heritage, and to counter the negative image of this indigenous group in Irish society.

Weaknesses:
The main weakness of the programme was the initial difficulty of getting the women to share their stories in an atmosphere of trust. The training was identified as a priority by the women; however their nerves and anxieties about sharing their stories were evident from the start. Building trust between the participants and the storyteller was a key factor in the outcome of the training programme and required a considerable time commitment on behalf of the storyteller to achieve this.

Personal data about the presenter of the good practice

Aideen McBride, Professional Storyteller
Michelle Geoghegan, Trainer with the Tolka Area Skills Bank
Niamh McTiernan, Development Officer, The Finglas Traveller Development Group
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It’s Visible in your Eyes that you Understood! - Sweden

Background

Target group:
Twelve immigrants or refugees who had spent more than ten years in Sweden without learning the language or blending in with the Swedish community.

Context:
A project called Directa, driven by the European Social Fund and the Swedish Employment Service, contacted Fabula Storytelling Company in summer 2011. Directa tested various creative techniques to support learning and inclusion among refugees and migrants who had been in Sweden for up to ten years without acquiring the language or the culture. Along with other techniques, they also wanted to explore if storytelling could be a fruitful approach.

There was an official of the Employment Service who had close contact with the participants, helped them with the practical aspects and acted as a support during the course. All languages were represented by at least two participants, so that no one would be alone with their mother tongue. The group was led by a professional storyteller and educator, Ida Junker.

Objectives:
To investigate if storytelling can be an appropriate method to accelerate learning and consequent inclusion.

Detailed description

Activities & Methodology:

Icebreaking-exercises: A couple of games and name exercises at the beginning of each meeting created a good atmosphere, lowered performance requirements and shyness, provided many laughs and created a safe and happy atmosphere.

Listen to stories: Everyone told the leader one or more stories. The aim was that everyone would understand the story. The telling was therefore supported with gestures, sounds, small dramas and images, both produced directly and searched for on the computer, as well as discussions and explanations between participants in different languages. The narrator reads the expressions of the participants to determine when they understand the story - an important tool in language training. It was extremely difficult to get everyone to understand abstract concepts like happiness and greed, so common in folk tales. Concrete stories with few episodes and a joke/ethical twist worked best, such as the antique fable “The Wolf is coming” or the Nasruddin story “Feeding Clothes”.

Retell the story: When everyone had understood the story, they went together in pairs, and told the story to each other, but now in their own (shared) language. The aim was that the story would be understood with more depth and be remembered in the form of images in their minds. Then they went together into new couples and narrated the story to each other in Swedish.

Tell me a memory: Each hit had a theme, such as “animals” “meals” or “work”. The leader told an authentic memory, simple and modest, but not without drama, from her own life. Then the word was passed and each participant told their own memory, which does not have to relate to the theme, but usually did. Each story had to take time, stopping for discussions, explanations, dramatisations, pictures, etc., as above. Note that the purpose here was not psychological processing of memories, but rather language training / integration.

Homework: All were instructed to tell the traditional story and / or the memory at home for family or friends. At the beginning of each meeting, we did a round and asked how it went. (In a round the whole group listens to the one who speaks.) An example of an answer: “My children said, oh, mom, finally, you speak Swedish!”

The course ended with a joint visit to Fabula Storytelling Stage, which was very much appreciated. We also arranged a small performance for officials at the Employment Service, where all participants told a story. Coffee breaks proved to be an important part of the course, where the storytelling came more spontaneous. The impression was that the storytelling was common in this group, but that they have not experienced it in the Swedish environment before. That is an experience we have made many times before.

Partners involved:
Employment Service, Fabula Storytelling and the European Social Fund
**Issues, related to the story:**
In a group like this, there is a certain amount of chaos, which must be overcome with good humour. The planning was not always appropriate and the further course must be improvised. The support from the official from the Employment Service was essential for running the programme as they held the whole thing together.

**Involvement of storytellers: Cfr. Methodology.**

**Type of the story:**
Life stories mostly with some traditional folk stories.

**Timescale:**
The group met eight times with approximately one week intervals, during autumn 2011. In spring 2012, Fabula participated in a conference on language learning through creative methods. Planning for the project from Fabula’s side comprised about 40 hours.

**Special attention to the role of storytelling**
In this project storytelling was the main content and method. What distinguishes the process of storytelling is:

- Many “media” - storytelling is done with a lot of expression, voice, gesture, mime, etc., so the spoken language is not so important for everyone present. It is possible to understand a story without knowing the language so well. And you can tell a story in a language you do not understand so well.
- Reciprocity and equality - the narrative takes place in a kind of “third room” between storyteller and listener. Both of them change the story while the story goes on. Both of them are equally important. Everyone is concerned regardless of language, cultural or class background.
- Co-creation - Listeners are intensely active by creating internal images of the story. This happens automatically in the brain regardless of language. The images can then pass on as a (partially new) story in another language.
- Understanding - the narrator sees in the eyes of the listeners if they understood the story or not. The narrator can continue the narrative in a diverse and entertaining way until everyone has understood. The same can hardly be said about other ways to express themselves in speech, for example information.
- Commitment - What will happen? Everyone wants to participate in a good fiction, and therefore cannot avoid being involved also linguistically. Stories often contain ethical dilemmas that encourage discussion.

**Evaluation**

**Influence (impact) on learners:**
A very careful evaluation was made by Directa, with interviews of the participants and tape recordings that showed “before” and “after” for language development. The result was overwhelmingly positive. All mentioned the joy and warmth they experienced within the project. Everyone said that they learned a lot of Swedish; some said “more than at SFI” (Swedish for Immigrants).

**Strengths:**
The participants were very much involved and liked the training very much. They started to use the Swedish language as they felt empowered. They felt safe and could use their own memories as a platform. The group also started to help each other for words in Swedish that they did not know. Some of the students say that they learned more talking in this course than in the common SFI or in all the years they have been in Sweden.

**Weaknesses:**
Many participants in the group had so many practical problems with their life that they had to take time from the course to solve this, e.g. attend hospital, go to other authorities, etc.

**Personal data about the presenter of the good practice**
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CHAPTER 5
Pilot projects
The pilot projects, presented in this chapter, are an integral part of Sheherazade as their role within the overall frame of the project was to facilitate project partners to assess and reflect upon possibilities that storytelling provides in real-life adult learning environments. The pilots allowed us to study the effectiveness of storytelling within established settings to determine its effectiveness as a pedagogical tool to promote social inclusion and encourage language learning. The pilot projects can in essence be considered as action research projects that facilitated planning, acting, evaluating, refining and learning from those experiences, in order to improve or enrich mainstream training practice. It is our intention in this chapter to share with you our experience, insight and knowledge in the hope that you will benefit from it. All exercises used and tested during the pilots are described in chapter 3.

**Storytelling for Language Learning at an Early Stage - Austria**

**Organisation:**
Brunnenpassage in cooperation with Volkshochschule Ottakring

**Address**
Brunnengasse 71, 1160 Wien
Ludo-Hartmann-Platz 7 1160 Wien

**Type of organisation**
The Brunnenpassage is a community art centre that encourages people from different national and socio-cultural backgrounds to participate in art and cultural programmes. As a platform for arts and cultural events, the Brunnenpassage is designed to reach especially those people who have no access to the cultural institutions of the city. Promoting access to contemporary art events for a diversity of people, including especially members from marginalised communities, is a major objective of the work of the Brunnenpassage.

The Volkshochschule Ottakring is a local and district branch of Wiener Volkshochschulen, an adult education centre, which aims to provide citywide and low-level education to people living in Vienna. The Wiener Volkshochschulen is committed to the value of democratic access to knowledge and education and provides education opportunities to diverse people. Language learning courses are a major agenda of the Volkshochschule Ottakring.

**Description of the pilot**

**Setting:**
In the Austrian Sheherazade Pilot Project the Brunnenpassage has chosen to implement storytelling into traditional ways of language teaching and learning. The project cooperated with a large local adult education centre “Volkshochschule Ottakring”, which is situated not far from Brunnenpassage. The pilot project was carried out during a German language course, which consisted of three four-hour classes each week, running over a period of 9 weeks. The storyteller visited the class during 8 sessions, which lasted around two hours each. Initially, the language teacher was unable to imagine how exactly these storytelling units would unfold. As a result, the storyteller conducted the first unit by herself. The following sessions were accompanied by sessions of preparation and reflection, both by the teacher and the storyteller. Consequently, the teacher began to act as an active assistant to the storyteller.
**Target group:**
The pilot project was carried out with a diverse group of German learners on a rather basic level. The 15 participants mentioned nine different native languages: Punjabi, Thai, Turkish, Greek, Urdu, Uyghur, Sinhala (spoken in Sri Lanka), Romanian, and Spanish. The newcomers - some had arrived in Austria only a few months ago while others had lived in Austria for several years - were between 17 and 45 years old.

**Objectives:**
- to increase the motivation for language learning and self-expression
- to extend vocabulary
- to develop curiosity for cultural diversity
- to encourage free speaking and narrating
- to generate self-confidence
- to encourage trainers to include storytelling techniques and alternative methods into language courses
- to promote and stimulate group dynamics in language courses
- to improve listening skills

**Activities (short description):**
In the storytelling units, both traditional and personal stories were used. The storyteller had to choose contexts where the vocabulary was familiar to the participants. One theme that occurred in several exercises was how to enrich and deepen stories by focusing on the senses: talking about smells, feelings, sounds and so on. While working on dilemma stories, it became apparent that the participants had completely different experiences and values. Accordingly, the storytelling units not only generated new methods but also new content.

**Outcomes**
The collaboration between storyteller and teacher worked well. By the end of the project the teacher also slipped into the role of telling a story herself. The storyteller developed simple exercises for the storytelling units, which would often correspond to the topics dealt with in the German classes.

**Feedback**
When the participants booked the German course, they were not aware of the special storytelling aspect. Some of them seemed rather critical and insecure in the beginning, because they had no idea of what to expect from storytelling in language learning. After the first storytelling session, however, everyone was motivated, participated in the warm-up and understood that this kind of language training needs neither pencils nor desks. In the end, the participants’ feedback was very warm and positive. They quoted that they liked the combination of the two teachers, who obviously had very different approaches. Some said, that the communicative and playful approach was not only great fun and great motivation for language learning, but also proved to be an additional support for memorising. At the end of the project the teacher said that she is going to use stories and storytelling techniques in her future classes.
At Home with Sheherazade
Belgium

**Organisation:**
Landcommanderij Alden Biesen in cooperation with Vormingplus and Hasselt City Social Department

**Type of organisation**
Vormingplus is a non-formal adult education organisation that organises activities to improve the personal, social and cultural competences of adult learners to enhance their participation in society. It stimulates lifelong learning for every citizen, especially for those people who have difficulties to find learning pathways. The centre often cooperates with various social and cultural actors, organisations and sectors in an inspiring and stimulating way. There are 13 autonomous Vormingplus centres in Flanders and Brussels. Vormingplus Limburg is one of them; it co-operates closely with the Social Department of the city of Hasselt, especially in the field of newcomers and integration.

**Description of the pilot**

**Setting:**
‘Together at home in Hasselt’ is a ‘meeting project’, an integration project to stimulate social cohesion between newcomers and natives. The project tries to match a citizen of Hasselt (a ‘Hasselaar’) and a newcomer to become a ‘tandem’ or a pair. Each pair is challenged to meet regularly to talk and/or to attend a cultural activity in the city. The planning and type of activities is entirely based on the pair’s own initiative and preference. The idea is to get to know each other, learn about each other’s culture and to speak Dutch in order to give the newcomer the opportunity to practice the host language in a natural environment in order to feel more easily at home in the city.

Alden Biesen, the Sheherazade coordinator, was looking for a target group to pilot the Sheherazade approach in its area. Vormingplus Limburg was looking for a common cultural activity to obtain more cohesion/synergy in the group of tandems. It seemed a perfect basis for cooperation and so it was arranged: “At home with Sheherazade” was born.

**Target group:**
Taking part in the Sheherazade pilot was offered on a voluntary base. 13 ‘tandems’ of ‘Hasselaren’ (natives of the city of Hasselt) jointly enrolled with newcomers from Ethiopia, Kenya, Iran, Afghanistan, Morocco, Gaza, Ukraine, Turkey, Poland, Russia.

Every three weeks on Sunday morning this small group of people came together with storyteller Rien Van Meensel. Sunday morning was a deliberate choice as we had to look for a free period for most of the participants. Evenings were not really an option as especially single migrant women with children usually are not free then. The organisers also provided day care for the participants’ children during the storytelling sessions. This service lowered the threshold for many a participant. All sessions took place in the meeting rooms of Vormingplus. One extra evening activity was arranged, a visit to the international storytelling festival in Alden Biesen. Participants attended a story session in ‘Dutch for foreigners’.

**Level:**
All newcomers also attended lessons ‘Dutch as a foreign language’ at the local formal adult education centre. The level of Dutch varied but all participants were able to take part in Dutch conversations and tell simple stories.

**Objectives:**
- To obtain more cohesion in the group of tandems who normally operate on their own
- To offer opportunities to use and train competences for integration
- To offer opportunities to exchange cultural topics
- To offer new social circles to the newcomers
- To trigger talks and discussions on cultural matters, values etc.
- To help link up with cultural roots
- To improve storytelling competences
Activities (short description):
Storyteller Rien led the process of telling and sharing stories. Every session started with warming up exercises and icebreakers, to create confidence and build up trust. The first three sessions dealt with small life stories, recalling memories, telling about daily events, aspects of culture, describe their house and childhood, guide their partner through all places and telling … Each time the topic was first told in pairs or trios, only later in plenary.

Outcomes:
- The newcomers felt a lot more at ease in practicing Dutch
- Efficient exchange of cultural topics, values etc.
- Better understanding of each other
- Better understanding of each other’s situation
- Better knowledge about each other’s culture and about the new city, Hasselt.
- Better communication skills
- Better storytelling skills

Feedback

Lessons learned:
- It is very important to build up trust and to create a safe place for all participants to ‘open up’
- After some icebreakers the storytelling exercises always started in small groups (pairs or trios)
- The composition of our pairs or trios changed constantly but we made sure there always was one native (Dutch) speaker in it.
- We enjoyed working with a real (professional) storyteller.
- Some quotes:
  - We all have stories, it was nice to work in a group on a basis of equality
  - I also learned what it means to listen
  - I like the fact that stories open the door to your own memories
  - We shared stories from all over the world
  - Stories help prove we have a lot in common
  - I know the power of stories now and will certainly tell more stories to my children.
  - Telling stories (and having an audience) makes me feel proud of who I am.
  - My knowledge of Dutch has certainly improved, especially my speaking and listening skills.
  - I understand the city of Hasselt better now!

During the last three sessions traditional stories were told by Rien and used as a basis for discussion in the group or for a creative exercise by the participants. Participants were invited to describe how they e.g. see the garden in the story or what gift they would offer ‘the prince’, what image affects them most etc. Sometimes the storyteller told only half of the story; the participants had to complete it in small groups.

Participants were also invited to tell a traditional story they remembered from their life in their home land. Themes were discussed or compared with other themes in other stories or countries.

During one session a city guide took the group on a tour through the city and told local stories linked to different spots. The participants also told stories about their first arrival in Hasselt or stories linked to certain areas in their new home town.

The last session also involved cooking and bringing typical food products and celebrating the nice experience they all went through.
The Fishmonger Arnout and his Love for Soetkin - Belgium

Organisation:
CVO Leuven- Landen

Address
Redingenstraat 90
3000 Leuven
Belgium

Type of organisation
School for adult learning, specialising in classes on ICT, languages, Dutch for foreigners

Description of the pilot

Setting:
Classroom within the school. Chairs arranged in a circle, with additional chairs and tables to enable group work. Follow-up class comprising a city walk in Leuven.

Target group:
Learners of Dutch

Level:
level 2.3 (B1+)

Objectives:
• learners are able to listen to a story and find the information they need
• learners are aware of the local cultural heritage
• learners are able to use the story as a base to make it their own story
• learners are open to storytelling in the classroom and feel they improve their communication skills

Activities:
1. Board scheme to help understand the story - 5 minutes
2. Actual storytelling - 45 minutes
3. Speaking and listening exercises – 45 minutes
4. Storytelling exercises in groups - 60 minutes
5. Recalling memories and preparing for storytelling walk – 25 minutes
6. Reflection – 15 minutes
7. Storytelling walk – 90 minutes (a separate class)

Short description:
1. Introduction (5-10’): on a city map the storyteller marks the different locations present in the story. The storyteller also shows some objects and explains their meaning.

2. Telling the story (45’): The storyteller tells a story of a fishmonger, Arnout, and his assistant, Soetkin.

The story is set in medieval Leuven in the 16th century. Arnout and Soetkin work for Hein de Zeilmaker, the sail manufacturer, who is the best fisherman in the Leuven region.
They work in his fish stall at the market. Arnout is in love with Soetkin; she is his muse.

He works hard and saves all his money to buy her a ring. With a lot of effort, he is able to give her a ring that only princesses could afford. But Soetkin does not see the value of the ring and throws the valuable object into the Dijle, the river that runs through Leuven. She tells him she does not want to marry him because she does not want to remain a fishmonger for the rest of her life. She keeps dreaming of the ‘prince on the white horse’ and rejects him. After what has happened, the two continue to working together at the stall. Arnout is still in love with her, but keeps these feelings to himself. Years go by, and Soetkin has not yet found her real love. She still works in the fish stall with Arnout, and actually, they have become quite close.

One day, Soetkin is filleting a nice trout when in the fish's belly she finds a wonderful ring, the ring that she threw away years ago. Soetkin wants to give it back to Arnout, but Arnout insists she keeps it. Finally, Soetkin realises and appreciates the value of the ring, a ring that is also a sign of the value of Arnout's love for her. They marry and live long and happy after… But that is yet another story to tell.

3. Speaking and listening exercises (45’)
   a. What are the names of the main characters?
   b. What do they look like? - talk about medieval dress code, appearance, etc
   c. On a city map mark the places mentioned in the story and the road Arnout takes
   d. Review some sentences with prepositions from the story as preparation for own storytelling Draft a daily schedule of Arnout by means of pictograms
   e. What jobs have been mentioned in the story? - multiple choice exercise with pictograms
   f. Hold dialogues related to selling/buying on the market: vocabulary of market
   g. Which species of fish have been mentioned? And how is fish sold?
   h. A typical Flemish recipe ‘Paling in’t Groen’ (Eel in Green): the storyteller gives this recipe with as many details on colour, odour, taste, and emotion. After the story the storyteller explains that every story has these elements to ‘season’ it and connects them to objects. The students then in pairs tell each other their favourite recipe by means of the objects.

   i. A/B dictation of the Paling in ‘t Groen recipe
   j. Taste some ‘stokvis’ (stockfish)
   k. Learn the very short song on stockfish

4. Storytelling exercise (60’)

   Divide the group in pairs and complete this exercise:
   - reduce the story to 7 lines (10’)
   - reduce the story to 3 lines (5’)
   - reduce it to 1 line (1’) and share with the group (5’)

   Different tasks for groups
   Group 1: Name 5 actions, 3 descriptions, 3 objects, 3 feelings (emotions)
   Group 2: Draft a search warrant for Arnout
   Group 3: Draft a search warrant for Soetkin
   Group 4: Turn the story into a gossip
   Group 5 & 6: Tell the story from another point of view: from the point of view of Arnout’s mother, Hein, the ring, the Dijle (the river), the market…
   Group 7: Turn the story into a news item
   Share and feedback to the group (10’)

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5. **Storytelling exercise as a preparation to the storytelling walk (25’)**

The students have to be able to recall a memory. The storyteller gives a memory to each student. The memory has to do with the scene they will later tell. It is about something that happened, or an encounter, a feeling they had in the city, or the feeling to be home, a nice work experience, a love, a ring, something that happened in the market. They have to reflect on this memory and tell it to another learner. It can be a memory connected to Leuven, but that is not necessary.

Every group gets a scene out of the story. Now the learners have to interweave their story with the scene of the story they were given.

The storyteller explains that the next session, they will go for a storytelling walk. They will visit the places where Arnout and Soetkin once were and every group will tell their part of the story on one of the places where that part happened, and they will also tell their own story that now has become intertwined in the original story.

The story of Arnout and Soetkin will be retold, but will be a completely new story because the experience of the learners will be mingled with it.

6. **Reflection**

Before the story is told, it is important to know how the learners feel about storytelling? Do they know some stories themselves they’d like to share?

Outcomes:
- Learners were able to deliver their own products
- Thanks to the exercises on storytelling learners managed to tell a story
- Some learners stood in front of the class and told a short extract from the story. Not all were able to interweave their own memories in the story, but many were.

Feedback
- Learners had a very positive attitude for both the story and the exercises on storytelling and language learning
- Learners experienced the class as new and interesting, and hoped to do it again
- Learners acted as one group during the storywalk and respected each other when they told the stories. They also supported each other.

The story and the exercises created a strong connection in the group and towards the City
A Story with a Happy End
Bulgaria

Organisation:
Sofia University & National Employment Agency

Address
15, Tzar Osvoboditel Blvd.
1000 Sofia
Bulgaria

Type of organisation
Sofia University is the oldest and most prestigious Bulgarian University. The professionals working at SU provide expertise for many government and NGO through the SU research centre and organise joint initiatives including training courses.

The National Employment Agency provides a range of services to those actively job-seeking as follows:
• qualification and motivation training
• mediation services for job searches
• professional guidance to clients
• relevant programmes and measures to support employment

Description of the pilot

Setting:
Sofia University's Sheherazade team co-operated with the National Employment Agency via its divisions namely the Bureaus of Labour. They register unemployed adults and organise courses promoting their inclusion in the labour market. Through the bureaus of labour, the team of trainers from Sofia University have reached a wide range of target groups. Working with 4 main Bureaus, participants were selected and encouraged to participate in motivation training.

Target group:
Long-term unemployed people, who were experiencing social and labour exclusion.

Level:
Not mentioned.

Objectives:
• To increase self-confidence of the unemployed adults.
• To improve their oral presentation skills and their communication skills.
• To be able to present their skills and experience in the best possible way so as to help them find a job.

Activities:
1. At the beginning of the motivation training, a story was told by the trainer.
2. Introduction of the participants was facilitated through personal stories.
3. Individual work: each participant had to think and recall their stories and present in the best way, the 3 most positive sides and to hide 3 negative characteristics.
4. Group work: each participant had to present in front of his/her group stories for 3 positive and 3 negative personal sides.
5. Following this, improvised job interviews with different participants were held, they were encouraged to think about and present the stories from their own life aiming to increase their self-confidence.
6. Each interview was followed by group discussion on good and bad points in the story chosen and presented at the improvised interview.
7. Story summarising the benefits of training.
8. Stories as feedback of the participants.
**Outcomes:**
- Improved self-esteem of the participants
- Increased self-confidence of the participants
- Enhanced communication skills through the use of different storytelling skills
- Expression of appropriate words improved and greater awareness of body language

**Feedback**

**After the training:**
- In several interviews, the participants shared their positive attitude about the use of storytelling during the training. They expressed their desire for such training to be part of mainstream training practice.
- Evaluation questionnaires completed at end of the training show that for most participants training through storytelling enhanced their communication skills, self-esteem and self-confidence. In addition, they evaluated positively the usefulness of the training as it was dynamic and interactive.

**Results:**
The participants gave their positive feedback not only in their questionnaire, but in front of the organisers and each other, and also to representatives of the Offices of Labour, which sent them to that training. As a result of the positive feedback, a chief expert at the Office of Labour in Sofia expressed the eagerness of his organisation to repeat the training with other participants and to disseminate this good practice through other trainings.
Sheherazade Workshop, 1001 Stories for Adult Learning - France

Organisation:
Élan Interculturel

Address
7 rue Guillaume Bertrand, 75011 Paris

Type of organisation
Élan Interculturel is an independent association created in May 2008 by a group of psychologists and researchers interested in exploring diversity and making it a source of advantage. The main objectives of Élan Interculturel are:

• To create a better understanding of how diversity affects our life
• To raise awareness of the resources inherent in diversity
• To support groups in finding ways to use the cultural diversity within and around them for the benefit of the individuals and the group

Description of the pilot

Setting:
The pilot sessions were held in a language classroom at COLCREA in northern Paris and then at the Élan Interculturel office in the eleventh district of Paris. They were led in collaboration with French storyteller Jacques Combes, who has been a professional storyteller for ten years and has experience leading storytelling workshops with migrants in a FLE, French as a foreign language, context.

Target group:
The pilot programme was originally developed as part of a partnership with COLCREA, an association for Latin American migrants, but in order to create a more diverse group, the course was opened to migrants not associated with COLCREA. In the end, participants came from several countries such as Korea, Italy, Algeria, Columbia, Argentina, Venezuela and the United States.

Level:
Participants had varying levels in French.

Objectives:
During the pilot phase of the Sheherazade project, French partner Élan Intercultural had two goals: 1) to test the activities and methods developed in collaboration with other partners during a partnership meeting in Ireland and 2) to evaluate the success of the pilot course in achieving key partnership goals related to language learning and intercultural exchange.

Activities (short description):
Activities used during the pilot included both those that had been developed as part of the Sheherazade partnership and an additional set of activities contributed by the storyteller. The goal was to make the sessions interactive and to facilitate storytelling. Because the pilot was held in multiple sessions, with
Jacques, we were able to build upon the activities used from session to session. Activities included: “Icebreaker activities” and exercises linked to storytelling techniques.

**Outcomes**
- New bonds between participants, most of them would like to continue the workshop, and at least 7 of them will take part of another European workshop aimed at integrating migrants through culinary traditions and natural curative methods.
- New toolkit for working with migrants and heterogeneous groups.
- Better cohesion within the group.

**Feedback**
Each session concluded with an interactive evaluation exercise to give participants the opportunity to share their thoughts on what they had experienced. The pilot sessions had a very positive feedback from the participants. They said that they were excited to discover a new approach to learning French and that they would love to participate in future sessions. Similarly, the French teachers who participated in the workshop were eager to incorporate some of the activities used into their own classrooms and to have access to more resources that would allow them to use storytelling in their teaching.
Life Skills through Stories  
Ireland

**Organisation:**
Meath Partnership

**Address**
Unit 7, Kells Business Park,  
Cavan Road,  
Kells,  
County Meath

**Type of organisation**
Meath Partnership is responsible for the design and implementation of local, rural and community development programmes across our region. We specialise in building the capacity of local communities through the design and implementation of a range of projects and programmes tackling persistent incidence of exclusion and disadvantage. We also manage a FETAC accredited Training Centre offering a variety of vocational training and up-skilling courses aimed at improving the skills, capacity and employability of local people.

**Description of the pilot**

**Setting**
Lifeskills through Stories, the Sheherazade pilot took place in the rural town of Oldcastle, situated in the North-West pocket of County-Meath over a 7 week period. Training took place one morning per week. This community was selected as there was a need to promote community spirit and cultural awareness between the locals and the large Estonian and Lithuanian population who moved to the area to find employment.

**Target group**
The training was open to all members of the community however special efforts were made to encourage members of the indigenous community and local migrants to attend the training.

**Level**
There were no requirements set for attending the training.

**Objectives**
Lifeskills through Stories was designed to facilitate the development of essential life skills necessary for an individual to reach their full potential, as well as developing self-confidence and cultural awareness through the use of storytelling and creative techniques. At its core, the course emphasised the importance of self-awareness, goal-setting, decision-making, problem solving, open communication, building relationships, wellness and contributing to the community.

Lifeskills through Stories offered learners a unique opportunity to explore alternatives in their lives, to develop self-confidence, to do things in a new way and to make solid plans to reach their goals. It was a way of discovering more about themselves, their own abilities and what might have been holding them back from living life to their full potential.

**Activities**
- Participants were encouraged to share their stories, with the tutors and storytellers first volunteering to share a personal story to begin the process of swapping experiences.
- Participants introduced each other: participants were split into pairs and asked to introduce their partner highlighting interesting facts about them as well as their name, occupation/skills, hobbies and family situation.
- Storytellers used the format of the ‘fairytale’, they began the story and after each sentence the story was passed to the next member of the group to add to, until the group was left with a very unique and unconventional fairytale.
- Individuals were encouraged to share their stories, however there were also group work exercises and telling exercises, which were used to encourage team work, conversations and collaboration between learners.
- The tutors used various exercises listed:
- The story of my name
- Fortunately/Unfortunately
- A treasure from my childhood
- Gossiping
- Story circles

Outcomes

- Participants were more self-confident, self-assured and positive about the next steps they were planning on taking in their lives.
- Participants had better communication skills and were more aware of the cultural differences and similarities in their own communities.
- New friendships and associations were created.
- Participants also learned about the essential skills needed when telling a story.

Feedback

Feedback was given by all participants through an interactive exercise at the end of each session. All feedback received was very positive, with particular praise given to the tutors and storytellers for the relaxed, interactive and enjoyable learning experience they had facilitated. A special mention was given to the unique storytelling aspect of the course which encouraged creativity, the sharing of ideas and building of confidence amongst all participants. Many participants commented on the uniqueness of the course and that they never expected it as part of a training programme.
Personal Stories and Inclusion
Norway

Organisation:
Kirkens bymisjon, section Batteriet

Address
Visiting address: Fredensborgveien 24 A
Post address: Tollbugata 3, 0152 Oslo, Norway

Type of organisation
Batteriet is a resource centre that works against poverty and social exclusion in Norway.

Description of the pilot

Setting
The main pilot was arranged in the localities belonging to Batteriet, as the participants knew this place and would feel safer and more comfortable. We arranged a one day workshop for women with multicultural background at a resource centre called LIN. The main pilot lasted over 5 weeks, during which we met every Monday evening. The pilot ended with a storytelling café open for the public.

Target group
The group consisted of adults from mixed backgrounds for example, recovering drug addicts, ex-prisoners, unemployed people and migrants. The majority of the group were men.

Level
The group had different language skills

Objectives
The main theme was inclusion with the following aims:
- The participants were believed, seen and heard
- Recognition and acknowledgement of their own history and background
- That one’s cultural and historical background is valued as a resource
- That everyone’s contribution is important and that participants believe that they can contribute to a change
- Give a sense of mastery
Activities
We followed more or less the same pattern every time:
• A story was told
• Warming up exercises
• Exercises to find stories in their own lives
• Exercises to enhance the stories
• Closing conversations for evaluation and sharing experiences

Outcomes
• The organisation will continue with storytelling. The contact person attended all the sessions and was trained during the pilot.
• The participants would like to continue too, with some participants using what they learned directly in their lives, for instance to give a talk at a conference to use the methods in a new job and to undertake studies at Oslo University College of Applied Sciences.

Feedback
Every session used the following evaluation forms:
• We filmed all the sessions
• We had a talk at the end of each session
• One of us observed and wrote a reflection after each session

At the end the participants had to fill out a written evaluation. The participants final written comments were:

This has been exciting. Had to really get out of my comfort zone. Nice with memories that came when we were to smell, taste, see and feel our own childhood. Enjoyable with stories from all the participants. Was impressed and especially grateful.

Want to thank the organisations! May there be more like that course in future

The whole programme was great! Educative. Two hours at the workshop was relaxing, informative, positive and good!

Great job.
Pilot Sheherazade Fabula – It’s in their Eyes - Sweden

Organisation:

Fabula Storytelling in cooperation with Folkuniversitetet Stockholm

Address
Box 6901, 10239 Stockholm

Type of organisation

Folkuniversitetet is a national educational association with specialised courses and its own schools, from kindergarten to colleges and vocational schools. Folkuniversitetet is one of the ten study associations “studieförbund” within the Swedish folkbildning. Swedish folkbildning is the collective name for the activities conducted by the country’s folk high schools and study associations in the form of courses, study circles and cultural activities. Folkbildning is a part of the liberal non-formal educational system. Every year, several millions of Swedes participate in folkbildning activities.

Description of the pilot

Setting:

Since there are few professional oral storytellers in Sweden, not all adult education groups and courses that would like to use storytelling as a teaching method can be served. It would be more efficient to train the teachers and supervisors, so that they can use storytelling techniques in their work. This task became Fabula’s pilot for Sheherazade, in collaboration with the Folkuniversitetet. The Folkuniversitetet in Stockholm city is also responsible for the teaching of immigrants (SFI) in Stockholm. The pilot took place in five sessions from February to June 2013. The participants met at the Folkuniversitetet house.

Target group:

In this pilot, Fabula worked with both teachers who taught Swedish for immigrants, and community workers and tutors working with immigrants. The group was selected by the Folkuniversitetet. During the first meeting we talked about the purpose of the pilot and told stories from Swedish and international tradition. 25 teachers and leaders attended, with 15 of them agreeing to take part in the full pilot programme.

Level:

This was a course for adults, with two thirds of participants from migrant backgrounds. They all used and spoke Swedish fluently, but only a few of them knew something about storytelling, and no one previously used storytelling as a method in their work. The storytelling course was at a basic level.

Objectives:

- To help develop and use storytelling techniques in the context of language teaching for immigrants
- To teach these trainers how to use storytelling in their work with new immigrants.
- To demonstrate the power of storytelling as a method for adult learning
- To provide concrete tools for the use of storytelling as a tool for language training.
Activities (short description):
Teachers and storytellers for the pilot were Ida Junker and Tomas Carlsson from Fabula Storytelling. Every session started with warming up exercises: stories and games were the body was active. Playing, laughing and moving are a very important start to develop the art of storytelling. Safe and positive communication was essential for participants to gain confidence to tell.

When the group had warmed up, training in actual storytelling would start. By using short traditional stories different elements could be practiced, like how different senses can create images, or how a scene in the story is embroidered into big images. Participants practiced in pairs, with regular changes. After participants had read their story once quietly, they were not allowed to use the written text anymore. They had to work with the images that oral narrative creates inside the head of both the narrator and the listener.

After having practiced techniques and methods with traditional story material, the pilot group continued with personal life stories. Everyone had their own experiences and stories. By using simple everyday stories also the shy person dares to tell about his/her own memories. As listening to these stories created images in the peoples’ heads, the listeners started to recall their own stories and felt the need to tell them also. One of the participants said that she did not have any stories; nothing special ever had happened to her. After listening to stories from others however, it turned out that she was carrying a lot of dramatic events, as well as many family anecdotes.

For the method we used in the pilot, it was important to work with simple personal stories that were recognisable for the group. We worked with concrete themes e.g. food and pets etc. If a group has weak language skills more abstract themes are difficult to understand, and then no internal images or stories will come. One example is the concept of “love”. This should best be broken down into specific events that have to do with love like “a wedding” or “the first kiss”.

Our intention was to primarily use simple life stories, where everyone could relate to. We did not want to work with traumatic memories such as refugees may have. This requires special knowledge and expertise that many teachers may not have. The goal was to practice the language based on the joy and the desire to tell. If this desire and joy is strong, and the conditions are tolerant, participants will overcome difficulties with vocabulary and grammar. The conversation always starts with the story; this gives confidence offering more words and better grammar. Wanting to use a language for stories and communication, even in a “classroom situation” is the foundation for learning it.

During the pilot’s last meeting, everyone had to go on stage and tell a story for the group. Most participants had chosen one of their own life stories, usually with a hilarious plot. Many were amazed that they could tell so well and remember the material. After every lesson the participants were urged to try the new skills in their own work with immigrants. We also had discussions on how to use it in adult learning and give examples how to use it with their groups. Part of the sessions was documented with photo and film by Tomas Carlsson.

Outcomes:
The participants learned the basics of storytelling and became good and confident enough to tell and use storytelling in their work. They got tools for storytelling and understood how to use them. At least 2/3 of the group tried to use it in their own work with immigrants. Everyone found storytelling very funny and useful for adult learning.

Feedback
Once again we can see the fun and creative power that is realised when we use this method. Always start with play and fun! For safety and comfort. It set everyone in the group on the equal level. Everyone loves to listen to stories, and this creates own memories and the desire to tell.

For the method, it is better to have full days rather than half-day sessions, but in this course it was not possible. It is important that the employer supports this kind of courses. In this case, participants were allowed to attend the course during their regular working time.
**Organisation:**
Superact

**Address:**
www.superact.org.uk

**Type of organisation:**
Community Interest Company using creatively the Arts as an educational tool.

**Description of the pilot**

**Setting:**
St Paul's Learning Centre, Bristol.

**Target group:**
English learners from Sudan and Somalia. ESOL students at the Learning Centre.

**Level:**
Beginners to medium.

**Objectives:**
- Improve confidence in speaking publicly.
- Move away from pen and paper to have a more playful approach to the English language.
- Tell a story in an engaging way.

**Activities:**
Working on the skills of a good story storyteller: looking at dict-ion, body language, dialogue…
Working on specific stories, both fairytales and real life stories. Interspersed with circle games and memory games. Each session would begin with listening to a story and discussing it. Then we’d get up and ‘into our bodies’ through games. Then we’d look at the story we’ve heard and worked on particular aspects, for example how to create dialogue, or how to practice eye contact with your audience.

Tea break and lunch provide very important moments for socialising!

**Outcomes:**
By the end, each student stood in front of the group and told a story, with much emotion and laughter.
Some great talents were discovered.
One important outcome for mothers in the group was to be able to engage their children with story.
In general, much more ease in just speaking out, a critical threshold was passed for many.
Feedback

“My written English is much better than my speaking; I’m the best student in my class, but so far, I have never spoken freely in a group. This is the first time. I found the confidence to do it because it was fun and I wanted to participate.”

“I started to speak loudly in front of a group, using body language and visual memory. All the techniques we’ve learned will help me enormously in everyday life, with my kids but also in my community. We host monthly events and story would be perfect to bring everyone together. Maybe one day I will be a storyteller!”
References and resources

General Bibliography


Kirkpatrick, R. Stories Always. 2012.


Rossiter, M. Narrative and stories in adult teaching and learning. ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult Career and Vocational Education, Columbus, OH, 2002.

Van Lakerveld, J & Gussen I e.a. AQUEDUCT, Acquiring Key Competences through Heritage Education. Alden Biesen, 2011.

Recommendations from the Storytellers

Guérir par les contes. Nouvelles clés n° 42.


Online Resources

FEST: Federation for European Storytelling: www.fest-network.eu
Norwegian suggestopedy organization’s webpage: www.norsksuggestopediforening.no
Digital library of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France: http://gallica.bnf.fr/
The internet archive: http://www.archive.org/details/texts
National Council of Teachers of English: http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/teachingstorytelling
Heather Forest: www.storyarts.org
Sean Buvala: www.seantells.com
ANNEX 1

Interviews of storytellers

For this research on methodology 29 storytellers from all partner countries and from outside the partnership were interviewed. A summary and/or video of these interviews are available on www.sheherazade.eu.

Austria: Doris Reiningher, Karin Tscholl, Margarete Wenzel
Belgium: Diane Sophie Geerts, Rien Van Meensel, Fred Versonnen
Bulgaria: Leah Davcheva, Vanya Diamandieva
France: Rachid Akbal, Jacques Combe, Abbi Patrix, Caroline Sire
Germany: Martin Ellrodt, Suse Weisse
Ireland: Jack Lynch, Richard Marsh, Aideen Mc Bride
Italy: Davide Bardi
Norway: Johan Einar Bjerkem, Heidi Dahlsveen, Kari Hastad, Barbro Thorvaldsen
Portugal: Luis Correia Carmelo
Spain: Carles Garcia Domingo
Sweden: Rose-Marie Lindfors, Mats Rehnman
United Kingdom Nick Bilbrough, David Heathfield, Iwan Kushka, Eirwen Malin
Sheherazade partners
If you want to know more, visit our website: www.sheherazade.eu
1001 Stories for Adult Learning

This manual is the result of the Grundtvig Multilateral Project “Sheherazade, 1001 Stories for Adult Learning”, which was co-ordinated by the Landcommanderij Alden Biesen (BE) and funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission.

Translations of this manual in Bulgarian, Dutch, French, German, Norwegian, Spanish and Swedish are available on the Sheherazade website:

www.sheherazade.eu