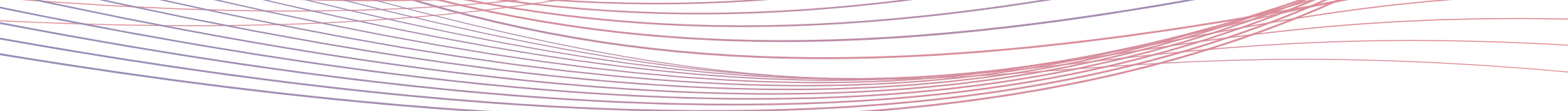




Digital Education
Participatory
Adult Learning

TOOLKIT

Digital Education & Participatory Adult Learning



This toolkit has been created to act as a practical companion to our *Guide*, and is aimed at supporting adult educators who wish to use participatory methods to deliver digital storytelling. Over the course of four sections we offer tips, case studies, activities and guidance to support you on this journey.

We hope you enjoy working with the methods as much as we have!

The DEPAL Team

(The DEPAL team is made up of participatory adult education specialists from the UK, Ireland, Italy, Greece, Spain)



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This project has been funded with support from the European Commission under the Erasmus+ program Cooperation for innovation & the exchange of good practices, Strategic Partnerships for adult education. The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of information contained therein.

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DEPAL TOOLKIT

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PART ONE

Creating a Learning Community



We are half-human, half-story”

Ben Okri

There is an Irish language proverb that says, “Tús maith leath na hoibre.” It translates as “A good start is half the work.” This is true of much of life and certainly true when applied to groups. There is an abundance of literature and experience that point to the importance of the initial stages of a group. Tended well in the early stages, a group can grow and flourish and engage positively with the challenges it faces. Neglected in the initial phase, a group can become stuck, flounder and fail to reach its potential.

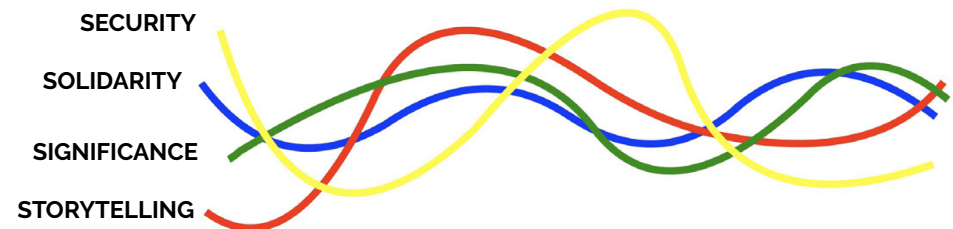
This section is concerned with sowing the seeds for a positive, fruitful experience of a learning group. We say sowing the seeds rather than laying the foundation because groups are more akin to organisms than to buildings. The pioneering social psychologist Kurt Lewin

The work we'd put in at the start meant I felt a loyalty to the group and the project that made me stay through the hard slog.

Leah, participant, Ireland

is credited with coining the term Group Dynamics. He did not coin the phrase Group Mechanics. This chapter honours that insight by providing sufficient structure and direction as well as encouraging spontaneity, responsiveness, emergence, the creation of new knowledge and multiple possibilities.

The material offered in this chapter is designed to help a facilitator/educator create a learning community. By community we mean a space where people experience a sense of security, solidarity and significance. Security implies safety, respect and an absence of fear. Solidarity is concerned with feelings of camaraderie, mutuality and interdependence. Significance suggests that everyone has a part to play, a contribution to make. Everyone matters. To these three S's of security, solidarity and significance we add a fourth S, storytelling.



A learning community is one where all contribute and all receive. Everyone's experience is valued and respected and knowledge from beyond the group is used to validate and challenge existing perspectives. The processes outlined in this section suggest that no one knows it all and no one knows nothing.

Guidance is offered about the sequencing of processes and exercises. But facilitators/educators must also look to their own experience and competence and the lived reality of the group to choose appropriate exercises and sequences. The chapter does not pretend that democratic, collaborative community creation and learning is a predictable, linear process with predetermined outcomes. This kind of learning can be challenging, exciting, surprising and unpredictable. It encourages us to venture into new landscapes rather than arriving at a familiar bus terminus. It mirrors the kind of learning accrued in engaging in life's adventure.



Words are how we think - stories are how we link "

Christina Baldwin

It is through the sharing of stories that community is created and through the creation of new stories that community is strengthened.



What we have outlined above is applicable in all group work and learning settings. However, with the increasing move to work online, we add some additional comments specific to that reality.

AS YOU MOVE THROUGH THIS SECTION OF THE TOOLKIT YOU WILL FIND:

- CREATING A LEARNING COMMUNITY ONLINE
- PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITIES



Creating a Learning Community Online



“Maybe stories are just data with a soul”

Brené Brown

Designing and Adapting processes

In creating a learning community online, we are looking to address the same needs, of creating a space where all will experience a sense of security, solidarity and significance. Because of the different context, thought needs to be given to how to achieve that.

This can mean adapting exercises, but also creating new exercises, and giving more attention to building relationships and connections in a context where people won't naturally connect over tea breaks.

The use of breakout rooms helps with this, but the differences between breakout rooms and small groups in a shared physical space require thinking through. We have a variety of ways of mixing up groups so that each participant meets everyone else, and online it can be helpful to work some of this out ahead of a session.

Using breakout rooms

In the early stages of building the group, it's useful to keep an eye on the mixing of groups, so that people get to spend time in small groups with each of the other participants. This needs different preparation when you are working with group who are not all in a room together.

On Zoom, there is an option to close the breakout rooms, in which case people are brought directly back to the main group.

As an alternative, we often use 'Broadcast' to send a message to groups when it is time for them to come back. This means that they won't be cut off mid sentence, or spend the countdown time with their attention caught by the countdown clock. Participants have described this as a gentler way to move between groups. It does of course mean you need to allow an extra couple of minutes in the timing.

**** When giving instructions for exercises in a breakout room, it is helpful to show them using 'share screen', and also paste into chat before opening rooms, so participants can refer to it in their breakout rooms. ****

Planning a Workshop

In the pages which follow, we outline some of the exercises and processes which we used with groups, which will create a positive group culture, and introduce a participative experiential approach.

Later sections focus on the specifics of storytelling and creating a story in digital form.

The facilitator/educator will need to choose which exercises to use, (from those offered here, as well as from your own resources) and in what sequence they will use them, in the light of the group they are working with, and their context.

The three case studies in *Part Four* of this toolkit show examples of exercise selection and sequencing. They demonstrate how this selection of exercises and sequencing are influenced by the particular group, and by what emerges as the group develops. This can provide a useful reference in planning a workshop.

In the following pages we outline a range of exercises:

- **Photolanguage**
- **Story of our Names**
- **From Preoccupied to Occupied**
- **Listening Sentences**
- **Object Stories**
- **Chick Pics**
- **Four Concerns in a New Group**
- **Work Well Done**
- **Body Talk**

The facilitator will choose which exercises to use and in what sequence



PHOTOLANGUAGE



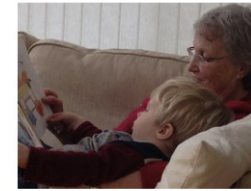
PURPOSE:

To help people get to know each other better and begin to share something of themselves in a relaxed way. It is a useful opening exercise for a new group.



ONLINE PROCESS:

1. Prepare a slide show with a direct link (e.g. googleslides) which you can share with the group. This should include a varied selection of pictures, with, for example, pictures of people or groups, city and pastoral scenes, abstracts, objects, comic and serious studies. (You might decide to use either all colour pictures, or all black and white pictures.)
2. Invite everyone in the group to follow the link and browse the pictures noting any that attract them. Invite them to choose one, and make a note of the slide number.
3. Form small groups of three or four in breakout rooms. Invite each person to join their breakout room and to tell the others there their name, and say something about their picture.
4. After time for conversation in the small groups, invite everyone to rejoin the main group. In the main group, ask each person to say their name and to say just one sentence about their picture. (As facilitator, have the slideshow ready to share screen, so everyone can see the pictures, and move to the relevant picture as each person gives the number or describes it.)



PROCESS FOR GROUP IN A SHARED PHYSICAL SPACE:

1. Place a selection of pictures / postcards / photographs around the room on tables. They should be a varied selection with, for example, pictures of people or groups, city and pastoral scenes, abstracts, objects, comic and serious studies. (You might decide to use either all colour pictures, or all black and white pictures.)
2. Invite everyone in the group to browse the pictures noting any that attract them.
3. Make it clear that they should not pick one up until you say so.
4. When everyone has had a chance to view them all, invite each participant to choose one that they are attracted to.
5. Invite each person to meet another person and to tell them their name and to say something about their picture.
6. After time for conversation between the pairs, invite each person to move on to another person, and again tell their name and to say something about the picture.

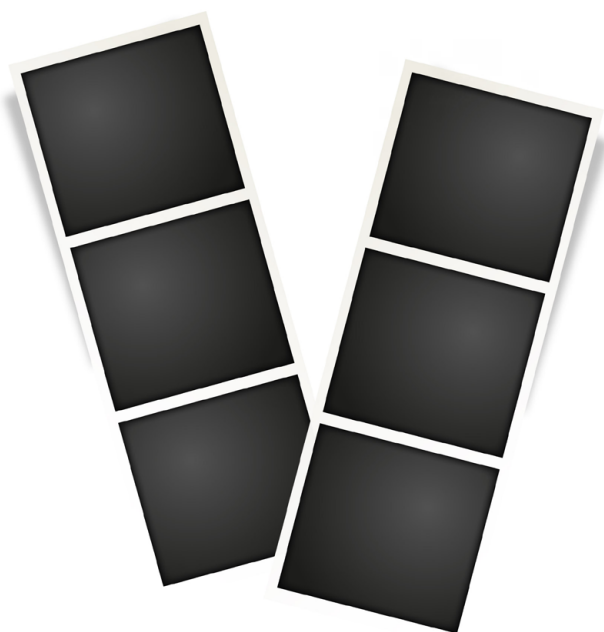
7. If the group is very large, repeat a third or fourth time.
8. Bring the group back to the circle and beginning with the facilitator, everyone says their name and something about the picture.

**TIME:**

20 - 30 minutes depending on the size of the group

**MATERIALS AND PREPARATION:**

A collection of photos/slides with shareable link



**** A good collection of photos is a very useful resource for a group facilitator. You can collect these yourself from newspaper cuttings, postcards, the internet and other sources. You can also buy photo collections. (for example PHOTOSPEAK, available from Partners Training for Transformation (www.trainingfortransformation.ie). For PHOTOLANGUAGE, you will need approximately three times as many photos as there are participants. A similar exercise can also be done with a collection of small objects.****

STORY OF OUR NAMES



PURPOSE:

This exercise uses story, and helps people to learn names and to build connection with each other. It can be a way to explore the various ways in which names are chosen and given to people in different cultures.



ONLINE PROCESS:

1. Invite participants to write down their name. Then ask them to add all the names they have been called by. You might like to model this, giving your full name, and also any variations. For example
 - Maybe you've changed your name
 - Maybe you've been called by shorter (or longer) versions of your name (e.g. "Pet" names, diminutive forms)
2. Maybe you took a name for religious or cultural reasons. There may be a story or significance to one or more of these names, (for example who chose it, how it was chosen, what it means, why it was chosen, a name might have a special family connection, it could be connected with a particular event, one might have been named after a relative or a famous person, there may have been a special ceremony or ritual at which the name was given). You might also tell a story about your own name. Give participants a couple of minutes to think about a story of their name.

3. Form breakout groups of 4 or 5, and allow a few minutes per person for telling their stories in the small groups. Call everyone back to the main group and invite each person to say their name (as they would like to be known in this group) and one thing about their name. You can draw their attention to the 'Rename' feature which allows them to write the name they would like to go by.
4. Invite participants to comment on anything they learned from the stories in their group. (OPTIONAL STEP)



PROCESS FOR GROUP IN A SHARED PHYSICAL SPACE:

1. Steps 1 and 2 as above
2. Invite participants to share their stories of their names in small groups of 4 or 5
3. Bring everyone back into one circle and invite each person to say their name (as they would like to be known in this group) and one thing about their name.
4. Invite participants to chat with their neighbour and to discuss whether our names and how we get them tell us anything about our cultures. Follow with an open discussion in the large group. (OPTIONAL STEP)



TIME:

30 to 40 minutes



MATERIALS AND PREPARATION:

Pens and paper for initial notes.

FROM PREOCCUPIED TO OCCUPIED



PURPOSE:

To enable participants to be aware of any preoccupation they have, and to facilitate them to bring their attention to the work of the session.



ONLINE PROCESS:

1. Draw a circle on whiteboard (share screen) and write 'OCCUPIED' in the circle. Say that our intention today is to become occupied (using the word occupied to mean engagement in a task or piece of work). However, what can sometimes prevent us from becoming occupied is that we are pre-occupied with other concerns. Write 'PREOCCUPIED' outside the circle

PREOCCUPIED



2. Invite participants to notice if they are preoccupied, and to what degree?

3. Form small groups of three or four in breakout rooms. Invite each person to join their breakout room and to tell the others to what degree they are preoccupied. Invite them, if they would like to, to share something about what is preoccupying them.
4. After time for conversation in the small groups, invite everyone to rejoin the main group. In the main group, ask participants if they are ready to become occupied.



PROCESS FOR GROUP IN A SHARED PHYSICAL SPACE:

1. Invite participants to stand behind their chairs
2. Follow steps 1 and 2 above
3. After a minute, ask participants to tell the person beside them to what degree they are preoccupied, and, if they would like, to say something of what is preoccupying them.
4. Allow 3 or 4 minutes for this conversation.
5. Ask participants if they are ready to become occupied. When they are ready, they can move into the circle and take their seat. You can invite them to show HOW they are coming in (perhaps miming sending a last text, crawling in, jumping in with great energy...)



TIME:

15 minutes depending on the size of the group.



MATERIALS AND PREPARATION:

Flipchart and marker; (prepared breakout rooms if online).

LISTENING SENTENCES



PURPOSE:

To reflect on experience and personal styles of listening. This can be a useful exercise after people have been practising listening skills for some time, or can be used early with a group to allow them to reflect on themselves as listeners.



ONLINE PROCESS:

1. Share screen showing handout with unfinished listening sentences, and copy into chat (See below). Ask participants to take a few minutes to complete the sentences for themselves.
2. When everyone has finished, invite people to go into breakout rooms to share their answers with three or four others. In the groups, each person might start with one unfinished sentence that drew their interest, and the rest of the group share their responses to the same, before another member of the group begins a round with a different unfinished sentence.
3. In the large group ask people how they found the exercise.
4. Invite everyone to share one completed sentence.
5. Some questions which may be useful are:
 - Was there a particular sentence that really got you thinking?
 - Did you hear different responses from others in your small group?
 - What do you find challenging in listening?

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SHARING IN SMALL GROUP

LISTENING SENTENCES, A WAY TO GET STARTED:

1. One person in your group begin by sharing how they completed one sentence which they found interesting. Everyone else in the group share on the same sentence.
2. A second person begin a round, with a sentence they found interesting
3. Then the next person.
4. Continue going around



PROCESS FOR GROUP IN A SHARED PHYSICAL SPACE:

1. Give the handout to each participant (See below) and ask them to complete it for themselves.
2. When everyone has finished, invite people to share their responses in small groups with three or four others. In the groups, each person might start with one unfinished sentence that drew their interest, and the rest of the group share their responses to the same, before another member of the group begins a round with a different unfinished sentence.
3. In the large group ask people how they found the exercise.
4. Invite everyone to share one completed sentence.
5. Some questions which may be useful are:
 - Was there a particular sentence that really got you thinking?

- Did you hear different responses from others in your small group?
- What in particular do you find challenging in listening?



TIME:

30-40 minutes

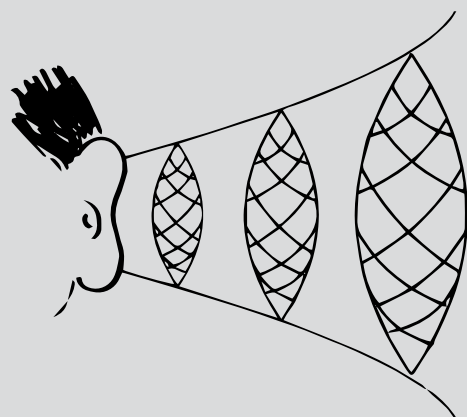


MATERIALS AND PREPARATION:

Unfinished sentences, pens, paper.



You might choose to follow this with an exploration of listening through filters, as described in 'Listening to ... Listening through ...' in the DEPAL Guide chapter 4.



LISTENING SENTENCES

PLEASE TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING UNFINISHED SENTENCES:

1. I find it easy to listen when _____

2. I find it hard to listen when _____

3. The people I find it hard to listen to are _____

4. I really like listening to people who _____

5. I don't bother listening when _____

6. It is good to listen when _____

7. It is better not to listen when _____

OBJECT STORIES



PURPOSE:

This exercise can serve a number of purposes. To tell a short story as a warm up to story telling, to get to know others in the group, and to see how an object can have multiple stories. The time limit for creating stories is important, as reduces the pressure to create perfection!



ONLINE PROCESS:

1. Invite each participant to take 3 or 4 minutes to look around the space they are in, to find an object which has a story, and bring it back with them.
2. Explain that they will be invited to go into groups of three. Share the instructions for the small group on screen. (See below) Allow about 25 minutes in small groups.
3. In the large group ask people
 - a. How was that?
 - b. What emerged for you from the exercise?



PROCESS FOR GROUP IN A SHARED PHYSICAL SPACE:

The Story Circle chapter gives examples of variations of this. You could also adapt this triad version described above for a shared physical space.



TIME:

35 - 45 minutes



MATERIALS AND PREPARATION:

Instructions, breakout room threes.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR OBJECT STORIES

In your three, give yourselves letter A, B, C.
Each of you show your object to the others in your room. Allow them to see the details of it. If it makes a sound, let them hear it, but don't speak.

Now A, create a story for B's object
 B, create a story for C's object
 C, create a story for A's object.

Take about 4 minutes to create your story.

Then A tell story of B's object. B tell own story of object.
 C tell story of A's object. A tell own story of object.
 B tell story of C's object. C tell own story of object.

CHICK PICS



PURPOSE:

The aim of this exercise is to create a safe space for people to discuss concerns or difficulties of being in a group for the first time. In a culturally mixed group it enables reflection on and discussion of what may be helpful for a culturally mixed learning group



ONLINE PROCESS:

1. Display the picture story (See pdf: 'CHICK PICS DRAWINGS') in a slide show. Then ask – what do you **see** in the pictures? Simply asking someone to describe it. Check that everyone sees the same. Continue questioning until it is clear that everyone sees that the chick is coming out, looking around and then going back into the shell. (Some people may begin to interpret, or relate what they see to real life experience. Stay with what people physically see until that is clearly named.)
2. Then ask either or both of the following questions depending on how the discussion is going– What is the chick **feeling**? **Why** do you think the chick might have decided to go back into the shell? (What might happen next?)
3. The next step is to **move from the picture story to real life**. Ask people to take a moment to think if the chick story reminds them of anything in people's lives. After a couple of minutes ask the group for any examples they may have come up with and are happy to share. Often there will be many examples of feelings of shyness / inadequacy / fear when people join groups for the first time, or when people find themselves in new situations.

4. Again explore **why** that might be so. Then if it is appropriate and safe ask if anyone in this group has ever had similar feelings.
5. Then invite people to work in small groups of 4-5, asking them to come up with **suggestions** of what might be done in this learning group, to make sure that anyone who is feeling uncertain, might feel safe and at ease as quickly as possible. *
6. Ask each small group to present their suggestions to the large group and give time for any clarification that might be needed. After hearing the suggestions check how people feel about these guiding the work of this group.



TIME:

40 minutes - 1 hour

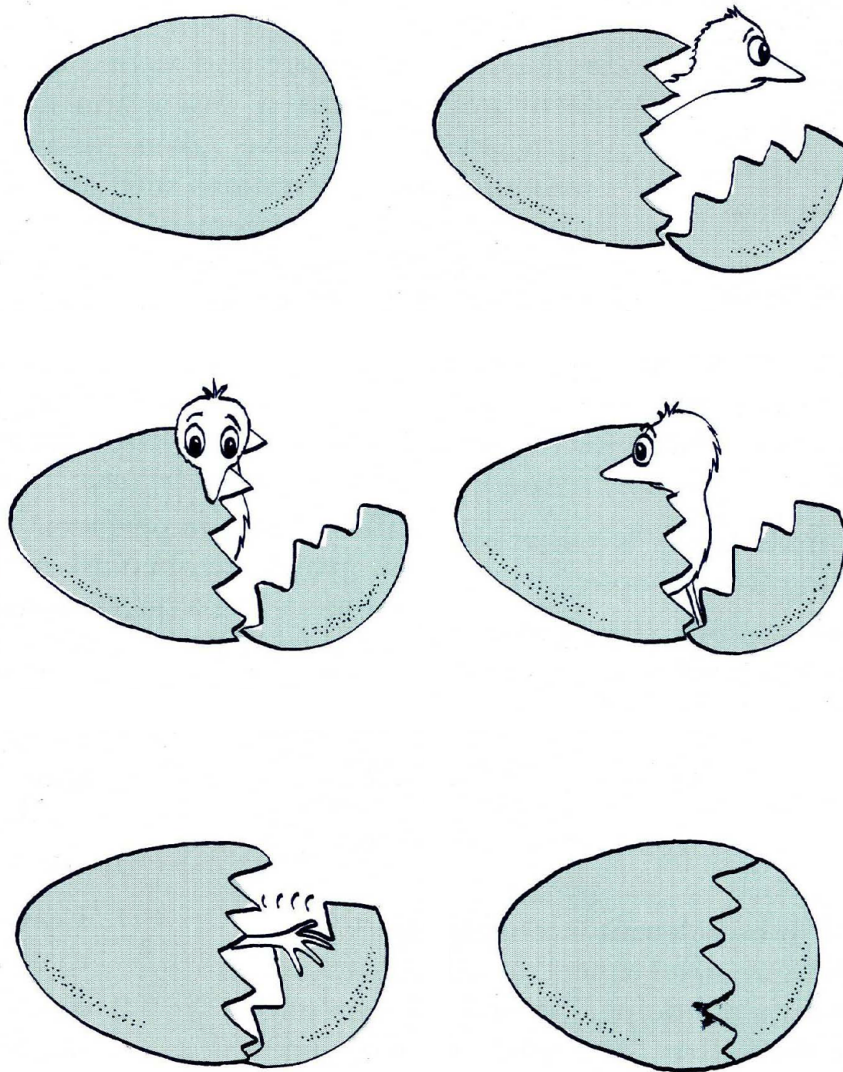


MATERIALS AND PREPARATION:

Chick pics, prepared input if being used, markers, newsprint. (It can be helpful to copy the pictures in the series so that each picture is A4 size, or even A3).



*An input on 'FOUR CONCERNS IN A NEW GROUP' can be useful before step 5 ****



FOUR CONCERNS IN A NEW GROUP

INPUT:

Four common concerns that many people have when they are in a new group for the first time are -

- **Will I be accepted?** When a person is new to a group they may be looking at others wondering what they are like and saying to themselves - "Will I fit in with these people? Will they accept/reject me?"
- **Will I understand?** Another worry people can have is that they won't understand what people say or mean, - "maybe I am not as educated, or haven't had the same experience, maybe it will all be over my head."
- **Will I be able to participate?** People in a new group are often asking themselves "If I am asked a question will I know the answer? If we have to do something will I make a fool of myself? Will I stand out by doing things differently to everyone else? Maybe I won't be as 'good' at the task as other people."
- **Will it be relevant/interesting?** As adults we need to feel there is a value in what we are doing. So people might ask themselves "Is this course going to be of any use? Will it just be a waste of time? Maybe I will just be bored and won't be able to use any of it afterwards."

(Based on ideas of John Heron)

The Complete Facilitator's Handbook John Heron, 1999 Publisher: Kogan Page

WORK WELL DONE



PURPOSE:

This exercise offers an opportunity for participants to reflect individually on their experiences, strengths and achievements. As stories emerge and are shared, the connections between participants continue to strengthen.



PROCESS:

The following instructions can be provided to participants in the form of a worksheet. Once participants have been given time and space to consider all of the questions, invite them to share their stories in pairs/small groups.

Please recall a time from your own life experience when you with others engaged in a piece of work that gave you great satisfaction and left you with a sense of pride. It may have been done quickly or over a long period. It may have taken place in formal or informal settings. It was a piece of work about which you might say, "We did really well there" and "I did really well". Although the experience was a positive one there may have been many challenges and difficulties along the way. Overall you can look back at this time and say, "That was work well done."

Reflect on the situation or event and recall:

- Who was involved? Where and when did it take place? What happened?
(Go over for yourself in outline and in detail what took place)
- What was significant or special about what took place? What was really positive?
- What were some of the ways you contributed? What was your most important contribution?
- What were some of the ways others contributed? Were there particular ways of contributing you really appreciated?
- What is it about that piece of work that is most satisfying or pleasing for you?
- Which of your personal values were expressed through this piece of work?

BODY TALK



PURPOSE:

This is a grounding exercise which can be used in order to allow participants to experience themselves in connection to the physical, even if they are just seeing each other onscreen.



PROCESS:

The facilitator talks participants through the following stages...

Ask all participants to sit in the most relaxing position they can.

Allow them to turn off cameras so that they are not seen.

Tell them to close their eyes and to follow the your voice (the facilitator).

Repeat the instruction to close the eyes. Invite participants to consider their hands, to feel their weight, temperature, relaxation.

Speak with a warm and calm voice, saying that this exercise will allow us to feel what our bodies have to tell us. It is a recovery activity to regain contact with the hidden and silent talk of our body.

Invite to place the hands on the top of the head, and to start to massage and touch the hair. After a few seconds (usually 4 to 10 maximum), invite participants to touch and massage the face, taking care to slowly focus on the temple, the eyebrows, the eyes, the nose, the mouth, the ears. Allow 10 to 20 seconds on this part.

Next touch and massage the neck, and after few seconds invite to move to the shoulders and then to the elbows, the arms, the hands. Invite participants reach the fingers, to touch each finger of their hands.

Invite participants to touch and massage the chest, and then the stomach. Allow 10 to 15 seconds on this part.

Invite to touch and massage the hips, and then to follow the body down to the legs, the knee. Finally invite to touch and massage the heel and the foot.

When this exercise concludes (usually around 3 minutes), invite participants to remain with closed eyes and camera, and to focus on the part of their bodies 'spoke' to them the most loudly.

Invite them to open their eyes and their cameras and to tell what part they felt the most, and what emotion or word they felt and listened.

The facilitator will collect all the words of emotions writing them in the exact position of a shape of a body then share the final result to participants. It is always an amazing discovery to see the body of the group as composed by the contribution made by every single participant.

The activity takes 5 minutes at most, but is a powerful introduction to the community space.

This activity has been contributed by, and was delivered within DEPAL's group training by Paolo Brusa of LABC

PART TWO

Working with Stories

We all have untold stories within ourselves...

The second section of this toolkit (and the second part of any training built around the DEPAL method) focuses on ways to draw stories out of your participants. The process celebrates participant's life experience, and draws heavily on the 'story circle' step of traditional digital storytelling methodologies, and will help participants to find and choose stories to develop into 'digital stories'.



Stories play a crucial role in the transfer of knowledge, and the creation of bonds between individuals and groups.

We hope that the activities and tips that follow help your participants to value their stories, and to share them with others. This is very much a person centred approach. The practical aim of the following activities is for participants to discover a story within themselves which they want to use to create their digital story.

The activities within this toolkit can be useful in lots of contexts:

- *social research*
- *museums*
- *media*
- *community work*
- *therapeutic practice and many more...*

THIS SECTION OF THE TOOLKIT IS MADE UP OF:

- **THE BASICS**
- **STEP 1: INTRODUCE DIGITAL STORYTELLING TO YOUR GROUP**
- **STEP 2: PREPARING FOR THE STORY CIRCLE**
- **STEP 3: THE 'STORY CIRCLE' – ACTIVITIES & GAMES**
- **STEP 4: SCRIPT WRITING**
- **STEP 5: REFLECTING & CHECKING IN**
- **CASE STUDY: RANDOM WORDS**
- **DETAILED TRAINING PLAN: STORY CIRCLE DAY**

THE BASICS

Activity should be adapted to the needs of your participants, but generally:

- Give yourself time – we recommend 2-3 hours.
- If you are working face to face, seats should be arranged to allow everyone to see each other, for example, in a circle, triangle or square.
- Every participant should take an active part in the story circle, including facilitator/s
- A safe, confidential and non-judgemental 'space' is essential - what is said in the room stays in the room whether you are working online or face-to-face. Later in the process participants are invited to share the digital stories they create online.
- Participants should have a draft of their chosen story by the end of the session.

The elements of a digital story:

- A story *
- A script (180 -250 words) *
- A storyboard *
- A narration **
- Some video editing **
- A screening event **

**See this section of the toolkit*

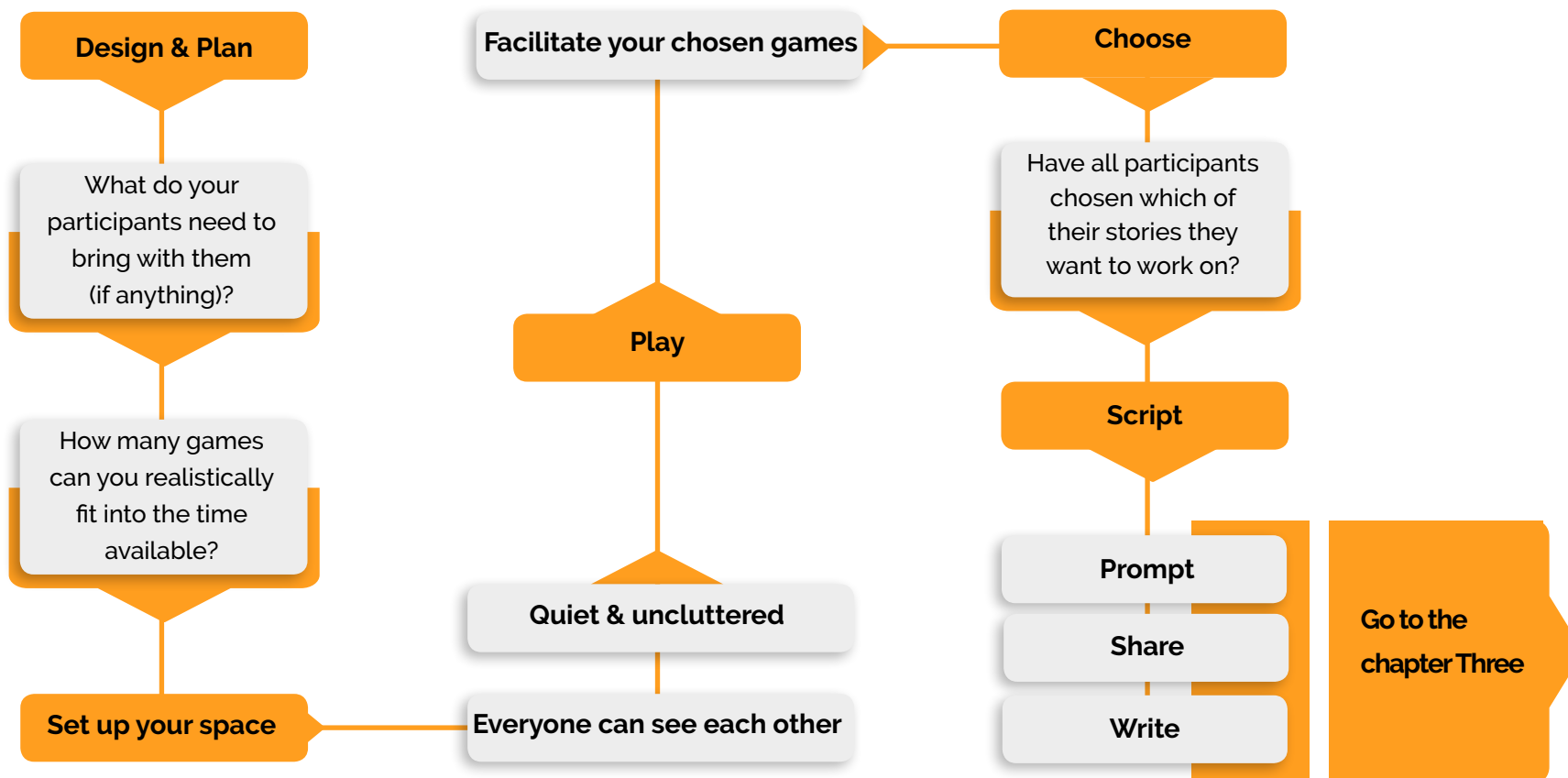
***see PART 3 of the toolkit*

Make it fun and informal. Inspiring people to tell stories can be intimidating for facilitator and participants alike, but most people really enjoy the opportunity to share stories about themselves. We're not given the time and opportunity to do this very often!

Karen, DEPAL Facilitator



The story activities in 'Step 3' below continue the work of the first section of this toolkit, strengthening the learning community you have helped to build...



STEP 1:

INTRODUCE DIGITAL STORYTELLING TO YOUR GROUP

Get your participants acquainted with the concept and methodology of digital storytelling and the process of the digital production (see part three of this toolkit).

- present the elements of digital storytelling
- describe the process and the timetable
- make clear what the next steps of the process are (e.g., when to select photos, when to write narration)
- explore copyright issues

A traditional digital storytelling project would deal here with ice-breakers, but within the DEPAL method this is addressed through the participatory methods in the first part of this toolkit. You should still choose appropriate warm up and closing activities to top and tail your sessions.

- Watch some digital story examples with your group – you can find lots of inspiration at www.depaproject.eu
- Take time to address any concerns or questions about the process



STEP 2:

PREPARING FOR THE STORY CIRCLE

Make sure to have all the resources you need for the activities you choose prepared in advance, or, where relevant, to give good advance notice to participants of what they need to have with them. Many of the activities require nothing more in terms of resource than a pen and paper for participants to make notes as and when needed.

Depending on your group, and the context of your training, you might also like to think of using different types of stimulus as story

circle resources. The activities in step 3 use personal objects, everyday items and photos, but food, smells, music amongst other things can also evoke strong responses and memories.

You might like to remind yourself of the purpose of sharing stories.

The image below contains some of our Greek participants comments about the power and usefulness of using stories in adult education work.



STEP 3:

THE 'STORY CIRCLE' - ACTIVITIES

Below we offer you ten ideas for activities to use in this part of your training. This is more than is needed! We suggest using three or four.

***** Working online?** Use breakout rooms where partner or small group work is required between group sharings.***

Game 1: Who is sitting next to you? (warmer)

Resources: none!

Invite participants to have a chat with the person sitting next to them (or their partner in breakout rooms of pairs if online). Tell them that, after a set amount of time, they will have to tell the whole group a story about that person. Give the group 8 - 10 minutes to chat (4-5 minutes per partner). Give a half time warning so that both partners have time to talk about themselves.

Tip: For groups who know each other well, set the task of finding out something that others in the group do not already know about.

Game 2: Random Words

Facilitator resources:

whiteboard or large sticky notes

Participant resources: pen and paper



Invite participants to write down a word that comes to their mind – it can be any type of word. Facilitators should collect the words and stick/write them somewhere they are visible to all participants. In a physical space this might mean on a whiteboard, or if online, the online equivalent (for example a Zoom whiteboard/Google Jamboard/shared PowerPoint slide). Give participants 5 – 10 minutes working on their own to write a story using all the words on the board. Next, everyone shares their stories.

This activity relaxes participants and gets creative juices flowing!

See the end of this section for a 'Random Words' Case Study.

Game 3: Mysterious objects

Facilitator resources: everyday objects in a bag, ideally more objects than participants. Items could include toy car, remote control, packet of instant soup, train ticket, etc.

One by one, invite participants to choose something from the bag (without looking!) and share a memory, a feeling, or a story that particular object evokes. If an object doesn't inspire any feeling or story, participants can choose again.

**** Facilitator prompts and questions can lead to interesting details being revealed****

If you are running your training online, for this activity you could prepare a Jamboard or similar with images of everyday objects, covering the objects with numbered sticky notes or text boxes. Participants can then choose a number and the facilitator can reveal the object underneath.



Mysterious Objects example story:

The participant takes a travel ticket from the bag...

"This reminds me of a holiday in Ireland when I was little. I was really excited about the holiday. We had a lovely time visiting castles and beaches. My mum drank Guinness all week because it's a big thing in Ireland, even though she didn't really like it".

The facilitator asks questions about the holiday and how they travelled. The participant adds "We took the ferry but on the way home it was really delayed because a man in a car at the front of the queue waiting to get onto the ferry became ill and had to wait for an ambulance. My Dad and I played cards with his children while everyone waited, and I stayed in touch with one of them who became my lifelong pen pal".

Game 4: Childhood toys

Ask participants to think of a much loved, desired or even hated childhood toy. Give the group a little thinking time, and when everyone has something in mind, invite them to tell a story connected to that object. Give some thinking time to note down some ideas and important parts of the story they wish to share.

**** placing stories in childhood can help people to open up. ****

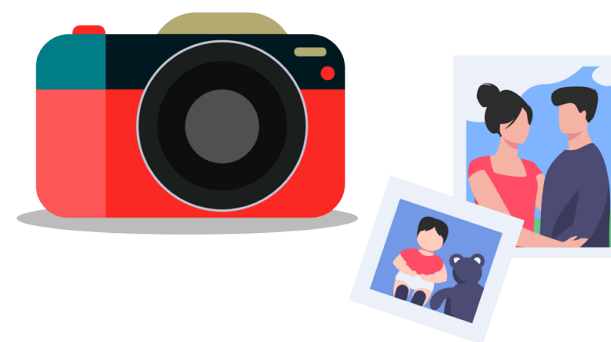
If online, an invitation to turn off video whilst doing individual work might be more comfortable for some of your participants.

Game 5: Personal photos

Participant resources: a photo

Ask participants to bring an important photo with them to the workshop. At the beginning of this activity participants swap photos with another member of the group, thus ending up with an unknown photo in their hands. Ask participants to make up a story linked to their unknown photo. Give five to ten minutes to think and prepare. When everyone is ready, invite each participant to describe the photo they were given/they chose, and tell their made-up story. Next, pass photos back to their owners who then tell their own story of the photo. This exercise can illustrate how an object can be approached in different ways.

If working online, participants can be invited to upload their chosen image to a shared drive before the training so that the facilitator can prepare a method for images to be viewed. Alternatively, participants can be primed to have their image open on their computer, and share them when required. This latter method requires some careful planning and instructions from the facilitator.



Game 6: Decisions, decisions, decisions

Participant resources: pen and paper

Ask participants to write a story about a particularly important decision in their lives. There are no rules except that the story cannot be longer than 50 words. After five or ten minutes preparation time, participants share their short stories in the group.

The strict word count in this activity helps participants to present their thoughts in a concise and purposeful way.

Game 7: Against the Clock

The purpose of this activity is to focus narrators by encouraging them to tell a story in a limited amount of time. The original version of this game invites participants to tell a story before a match burns down to their fingertips. We strongly suggest that a stopclock is used instead, giving participants 30 seconds to share their stories!

Give your participants 10 minutes to prepare stories about their passions; a person, a cause, a sentiment, an activity, or anything towards which the storyteller is passionate. Participants then tell their stories with a visible and strict 30 second countdown. If the clock runs down to zero before the story ends, the storyteller has to stop their narration.



Game 8: Love/hate

Ask participants to make two lists – the first of ten things they love most and a second of ten things they hate most - which they then read out to other members of the group. Participants should use their voice to express the sentiment they feel toward the objects in question. The lists may contain very diverse things (feelings, personality traits, events, objects etc.). Elements of these lists may suggest ideas for eventual stories, and the trainer can help elaborate their details through questioning and prompting. The exercise is an effective way to prepare participants for expressing sentiments and emotional tension with their voice when recording their final stories.

Game 9: Three objects

Participant resources: personal objects

A week or so before your training starts, tell participants to choose three objects from home which have a personal story attached (this can include photos), to bring along with them.

Invite participants to choose one of their three objects, and without telling the related story, pass it on to the person sitting to their left. Participants then write the stories of the unknown objects received. After the fictitious stories are told, the owners of the objects tell their own stories.

If working online, this works slightly differently, with the facilitator stating who the object is being 'passed' to before the owner of the object holds it up to the screen for examination.

Game 10: What's in a picture?

Facilitator resource: 20+ images printed out (for face-to-face sessions) or in a PowerPoint presentation (if working online)

Share your images with the group. Once the pictures have been viewed well at least once, ask participants to choose their favourite. In a physical space they should pick up their chosen image so that everyone ends up with a different image. Collect together the chosen images and pin them up where everyone can see them (if working online, take a few minutes to copy and paste the chosen images onto one page / whiteboard / jamboard). Invite participants to write and then share in the group stories that include reference to some aspect of each image (whether this is a reference to what they see in the picture, or a feeling or experience it makes them think of)

Some of these activities can be combined or adapted - for example one DEPAL training used 'what's in a picture?' (game 10) and invited everyone to give their chosen image a one word title, these titles were then collected and used for 'random words' (game 2).

Closing the Circle - Choosing A Story

By the end of the story circle, participants should choose the story they want to develop as a digital story. Some participants may have a clear idea of the story they want to tell (it is often the story linked to their own personal objects or photographs), but you might like to give your group some time in small groups to consider the question:

“which story would you most like to share with the world?”

And once they have discussed and decided, give a little individual thinking time for the question:

“what title will you give your story?”

Invite participants to share their titles in the circle.



CASE STUDY - A Different Type of Story Circle: Creating a Group Story

All of the above activities are easy to use face to face or online, BUT, within our own internal training for DEPAL partners which took place on Zoom, our facilitators (from LabCentro and Partners, Training for Transformation) decided to lead the group in creating a group story.



We used an adaptation/combination of the photo and random words activities above as follows:

- At the end of each training session prior to the story circle, participants were invited to look through their phone camera galleries, and choose an image that said something about how they were feeling about the training at that point.

- Participants uploaded their chosen image into a shared google drive.
- At the beginning of the story circle session, we all looked at all of the collected images (from two previous sessions).
- In pairs we shared our own images, and gave them titles.
- When back together as a group, the titles were written up onto an online whiteboard.
- We all individually did the random words story activity (see above)
- In groups of four we shared our four stories, responded to each others stories, and worked to create a new story from the four stories, that used aspects of each
- In plenary, we heard the three new stories created by our three breakout groups and responded to them.
- With all the text on a single page for all to see, we created a final shared story from the three stories through discussion, negotiation, and collaboration.
- The creation of the storyboard in a group scenario can be time-consuming as different participants bring in different imagery connected with their own cultural, religious, familiar or individual experiences and heritage. Allow the group to take its time while gently intervene in the common decision process. Trust the group!

STEP 4:

SCRIPT WRITING

To support development of the chosen story, after individual writing time adding information or editing, participants can share their stories in pairs or small groups. The listeners can then ask questions or suggest possible changes (this must not be a critical process, but a supportive one). After this, further time can be given to alter / add / take away / refine, with the support of the trainer if needed. The goal is a script of between 180 and 250 words. Now the final story is ready to be read out in the 'circle'

The script will need to be typewritten in order to move onto the next steps, and will become the recorded narrative for participant's digital stories.

Some Writing Tips for Participants...

- Do just start writing. You can always edit afterwards... Give yourself a time limit and just write.
- Find your own voice. Use language that is characteristic of and authentic to you and have the confidence to use your own idiom.
- Picture what you are writing about in as much detail as possible – feelings, colours, textures, smells.
- There's no need to tell the story in a linear way. Find what's most arresting and start there.
- Think in simple, short sentences
- Less is more. Edit rigorously.
- Generalities close things down. Specific, well observed detail is what will resonate.
- Everybody should be allowed enough time to develop, modify and finalise their story (between sessions if necessary/ appropriate)
- Facilitators can assist and support by asking appropriate questions and helping you realise where parts of the script are superfluous (often the exact date or place are unimportant).
- Read text out loud before finalising. Try your story on others and get feedback. Are you being clear?
- Treat your story with respect, as though it were the best story in the world.

The storyboard

Before the real digital work begins, scripts need to be added to storyboards, which provide a framework for choosing images in the following steps.

A storyboard is a simple table with two columns: one for the text (divided according to reading rhythm – usually sentence by sentence), and the other for accompanying photos.

The storyboard makes the proportion of pictures vs. the text in the story visible.

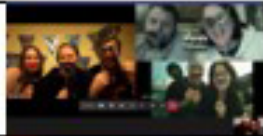




The storyboard helps participants to see if they have enough images for the script and whether they are well distributed.

In general, for a well paced, easy to follow film, a couple of sentences are the right amount of text for one photo.

A storyboard might look something like this.



A blank storyboard can be very simply created by inserting a two column table into a word or other similar document.

	This locket unlocks so many stories in my heart.
	It could tell the story of my lockdown 40 th birthday, surrounded by love in a virtual, screenbound world.
	It could tell the story of my little family. A journey that continues to surprise me.
	It whispers the story of my love affair with silver. Shiny things with which to adorn myself.
	But today I choose to celebrate the story of a friendship that has been with me now for 36 years. Most of my life.
	My best friend gave me this locket for my 40 th birthday.
	And in it she put a picture of my little family. It is silver. It contains the thing I hold dearest in the world. And it was from her at a time I couldn't see her.
	I touch it to remind myself of those whom I can not currently hold, friends and family far away, or sometimes just when my little heart (my toddler), is in the next room!

STEP 5:

REFLECTING AND 'CHECKING IN'

It is important to check in with your participants at various stages along the way. This might naturally occur at the beginning and end of sessions, but should also be considered after the various steps. Questions to the group that will support this process, and help you to reflect on the direction of training and the feeling within the group in order to move forwards effectively, might include:

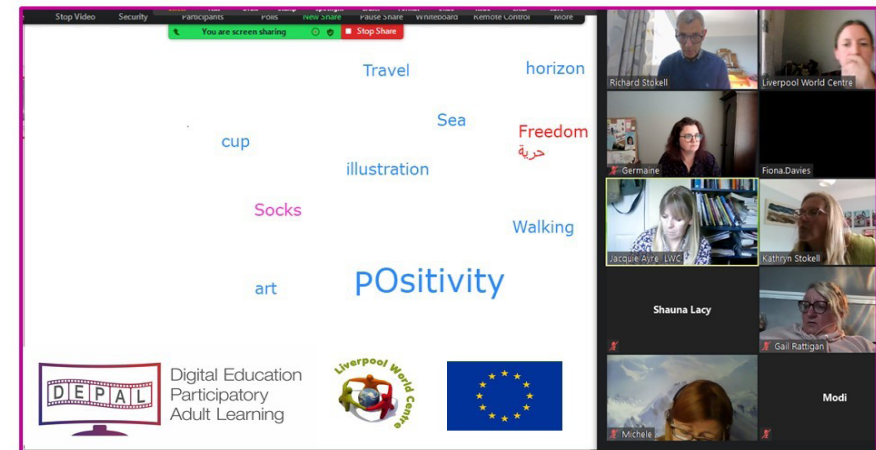
- How was the writing process for you?
- How was the listening?
- How was the sharing/reading your own story?



CASE STUDY – Random Words...

Liverpool World Centre delivered '*Random Words*' (Game 2) online with a group of adult educators from diverse backgrounds. The image shows the words chosen by the group, who did not know each other before their DEPAL training experience. Several group members were concerned that they were not 'creative', and had no experience of, or confidence in, their creative writing ability.

After ten minutes writing time, with an instruction not to stare at a blank piece of paper but just to start writing, everyone had something they wanted to share and felt energised for what was to follow. Here are a few of their stories...



I love to travel but I also love to come home. When I am walking by the sea I gaze at the horizon and take off my socks to paddle by the sea. It fills me with positivity. Then I can stop at a cafe for a cup of tea surrounded by art. This is an illustration of how a place can lift your mood

(Richard)

I looked out at the horizon from the boat with a cup of coffee in my hand. Freedom at last. It was a pleasure to look out at the sea, a beauty, an illustration of blues and pinks, a pure work of art. I started walking across the deck, my socks keeping my toes warm against the sea breeze. There was so much positivity in the unknown and the idea of travel that I was excited about what was to come and what I'd left behind.

(Shauna)

On the horizon I saw the cup of art I drank it which tasted like the sea. I now travel wearing my freedom socks...walking away walking away I see your cup of art in my illustration which I present to you as a memory card.

(Fiona)

Positivity is so helpful in life. It has led me to embrace travel and look to the horizon of life to seek new adventures. I also love walking by water or near the sea, sometimes feeling the warm, wet sand beneath my toes, it can be so comforting. The freedom to engage or embrace the overflowing cup of life is so important. To illustrate these life experiences and the full potential of human existence is a real art.

(Jacquie)

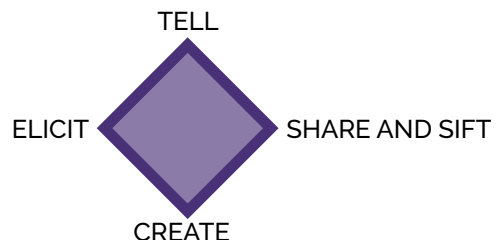
Gill decided to travel the world and did so by sea every morning she looked towards the horizon and felt a sense of positivity about the day ahead. When the ship was at port she enjoyed walking and looking at the art illustrations on the way back she stopped for a cup of tea she felt a sense of freedom when she took her socks of every night

(Gail)

None of these became the final scripts for digital stories, but, used early in the story circle, this activity gets participants to feel they have something to offer. It activates creativity and relaxes participants into the writing process.

DETAILED TRAINING PLAN: STORY CIRCLE DAY

Please note that the second column here is only really necessary if delivering online.

2.00	Welcome - day one collage Quick reminder/reflection using images from previous activities	Screenshare Day One Collage (Facilitator 1)
2.05	How present are you? Occupied/pre-occupied A number from 1 - 10 in chat pen and paper A circle - inside 'occupied' outside 'pre-occupied'. That part of you that is not present is pre-occupied. What are the things on your mind? Write them outside your circle	
2.15	Breakouts (Facilitator 2) Did anything in your reading particularly strike a chord or stay with you? Does anything in the chapter have any relevance to your work?	Breakout groups of 3 - ten minutes (Facilitator 1) Post questions in chat (Facilitator 1)
2.30	The Storytelling Diamond (Facilitator 1) Think of examples when you... Tell a story / Elicit stories / Invite people to share stories / Work with a group to create stories (participants have already read about this in the DEPAL guide)	Screenshare story diamond 
2.40	Storytelling prompts (Facilitator 2) What objects did you bring? What other things might remind us of or inspire us to create stories? (smells, foods, emotions, touch, words and language) <i>relationships, nature, colours, journeys, community, the recent past</i>	All hold objects up to screen - DO NOT EXPLAIN!!!
2.55	Digital story examples (Facilitator 1) <i>Syros, my love by Elvira Stellas - YouTube</i> <i>Rollong with the Punches - YouTube</i>	(Facilitator 1) have OPEN AND READY to share https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=piB-Clr3udM&t=135s https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yUEDvlynT18&t=127s

3.05	BREAK	
3.15	Story Circle (Facilitator 1) Game 1 - Who is sitting next to you? Game 2 - Random Words Game 3 - Three objects	(Facilitator 2) Breakouts of two - get to know each other a bit / come back and present your partner to the group Whiteboard - everyone think of a word (Facilitators participate) Screenshare Writing tip 'Don't sit and stare at a blank screen' Breakout pairs to choose an object from each other Back to the room - writing time Back into same breakouts to share the imagined story then the real story
4.10	FIVE MINUTE BREAK	(Facilitator 2) e-mail blank storyboard to all
4.15	Writing (Facilitator 1) Choose a story provoked by above games (PROBABLY LINKED TO ONE OF YOUR OBJECTS). USEFUL WRITING TIPS - SHARE DOCUMENT All write a first draft. 180 - 250 words. Share in breakouts with one other person. The other should ask any questions that arise. Time to re-draft. Summarise your story in one sentence.	Share link in chat (Facilitator 2) / screenshare USEFUL TIPS (KW) Breakouts (Groups of 2) (Facilitator 1)
4.25	Script into storyboards	(Facilitator 1) screenshare storyboard example HOMEWORK split your sentences and find an image for each - COPYRIGHT!!! Introduce www.pexels.com
4.35	Demonstration of video editing software	(Facilitator 1) to demonstrate!
4.55	One word reflection - how do you feel right now?	

HOMEWORK

Complete storyboard template with images for each group of sentences

PART THREE

Making it Digital

We all live in a world where images and stories create a circle where one refers to the other, and viceversa.

This simple phrase is self-evident in our digital era, and it was self-evident even in times gone by, when images ran from other sources, such as imagination, mythology, and popular tales.

These original sources are at the base of the same process: supporting the narratives that have been elicited during the 'Story Circle' to become a 'Digital Story' (a short video lasting 2 to 3 minutes).

The process is different from the old time way "close your eyes and see pictures of the story moving behind your eyes like a film", but it is, at the same time, somehow similar: "open your eyes and populate them with pictures for the story to appear as a film in front of your eyes".

Once your participants have found their stories and made their storyboards using the activities in PART TWO, this section will take you through the following steps, which you will need to guide your participants through:

- **CHOOSING IMAGES**
- **RECORDING NARRATION**
- **PUTTING THE ELEMENTS TOGETHER USING VIDEO EDITING SOFTWARE**
- **PRESENTING A SCREENING**

The steps of this process are described in their entirety in the [DEPAL Guide](#). We invite you to refer to the list of technicalities at the end of chapter 5 of that document.

As you will have discovered, DEPAL practitioners have delivered this work in two ways: one where a story is elicited from each participant, and one where a single common story is created by the whole group. Before deciding which of these will work for you, the nature of the workshop must be considered. Face to face work is similar and also different from online work, Particularly concerning timing, the possibility of facilitators offering one-to-one support during the process, and finally the different technical issues arising in the editing process relating to video editing software and audio recording.

We will work through these two scenarios:

Working face to face

The first scenario is the case of a face to face workshop, generally the most common group-work playground.



TIME

The '*Story Circle*' can vary in length and impact on the time remaining for turning scripts and storyboards into digital stories.

Face to face the creation of individual stories might take quite a long time due to the need for some participants to write and re-write, and for one-to-one support from the facilitator.

On the other hand, once the stories have been elicited, the creation of the storyboard is relatively easy and fast.

ONE-TO-ONE SUPPORT

The best way to cope with timing issues is to have at least two facilitators. From our experience, we suggest having colleagues supporting the facilitator in a ratio of 1-to-3 participants. With this proportion, no one normally has to wait longer than for a cup of coffee or tea before getting the support they need.

If no other facilitators are available, consider that requests for 1:1 support in the writing and editing process might take a lot of time.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

• editing software

Often individual participants will bring their own device to work on, which may mean that they are quite confident with their editing software.

**** In any group there is usually a participant more technically skilled and confident than others who is happy to give tips and support... Use them! It is good for you and often also for them ****

Another suggestion is the possibility to have a couple of IT technicians (ie: university students or trainees in IT). See the end of this chapter for a rundown of some possible *video editing software* to use.

• audio recording

Some of the proposed editing programs offer the possibility of directly recording the voice using the PC microphone. Another option is to record the audio with the most common recording app available on mobile, and then transfer the recording from mobile to the computer being used for video editing via bluetooth / e-mail / WhatsApp or similar / via a cloud or online drive.

Delivering a session online

The first thing to say is that delivering online has been challenging for us as well. The pandemic restrictions forced the whole DEPAL group training workshop, originally programmed to be face-to-face in Ireland, to be moved to online. It was new for us, and allowed us to deliberately accept the same assumptions as we have for our participants: learn from others, learn by doing, learn from experience.



TIME

Time management becomes even more important when working online. There are no informal chats or questions over coffee. The format is more restrictive, and giving technical support needs careful planning.

ONE-TO-ONE SUPPORT

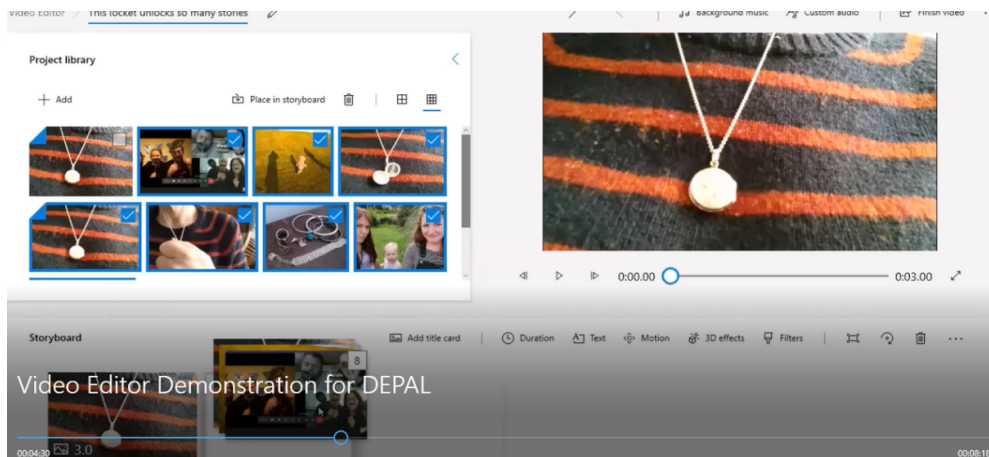
How will you offer 1:1 video editing support online? When working via Zoom, one of our partners offered one to one sessions in the main room, allowing the participant to share their screen and be talked through editing steps, whilst all other participants were sent to a breakout room with our second facilitator where they could continue independent work, but also chat and ask each other questions.



TECHNICAL ISSUES

- **editing software**

The facilitator should share their screen and demonstrate on the editing software he/she is more confident with (and ideally one which is not overly complex or dissimilar from any software being used by participants). Be prepared and confident. Click the image below to watch an example of an editing demonstration using Video Editor on a Windows PC.



Don't use lots of effects when editing - it can be too confusing for participants, but more important it can take away from the essence of the story and images being presented.



*** GROUP STORY TIP: Where the facilitator is editing for the group, in order to avoid participants getting annoyed watching the editing process, we suggest showing the generally process in overview initially, then showing the result which has been prepared in advance. This will allow participant to ask for technical suggestions for when they do it on their own.***



- **audio recording**

If editing a group story, the final amalgamated voice-over should be made on the facilitator's device. We decided to include the voices of all participants in our shared story, and found that the best solution was to ask each participant to record their chosen phrase on their own mobile, and to send it to the facilitator by e-mail, WhatsApp or shared drive.



*** Remember that different mobiles use different format for voice recording, and that they might not be readable by your editing program.
DON'T PANIC ! Simply use an online converter or software such as VLC Media Player.



Video Editing Software

The most common softwares in use are below. This list is by no means exhaustive and doesn't necessarily represent an endorsement or recommendation from the DEPAL project.

As the process is focused on increasing individual capacity, you can explore the use even of other kinds of software. The facilitator's role is not to force participants to use new software, but to support them to feel confident in developing their own skills.

Be open and prepared to learn new ways of editing even if you are an experienced facilitator!

Avidemux	Available for free for Windows, macOS and Linux. It supports all major video file formats (AVI / DivX and MP4) and allows you to cut and edit them with ease. Download: http://fixounet.free.fr/avidemux/
VideoPad	Easy to use even for unexperienced users. It allows you to edit, cut and merge videos using a convenient timeline, through which you can also apply transition effects and custom soundtracks to your movies. It supports all major video file formats and photos, while in output it is able to generate files intended for any type of device or online service. The software is available for both Windows and macOS, it is paid but can be used in a free trial version that allows you to test all its functions for a period of 30 days. download: https://www.nchsoftware.com/video pad/it/index.html

iMovie	Mac only. If you have purchased a Mac it is almost certainly already included as standard on your computer, iPhone or iPad. With this well-rounded video editor, you have the ability to edit videos, apply special effects and even make Hollywood-style trailers with ease. It's free, as is a "standard" on many of the Macs or downloadable from the Mac App Store.
Windows Movie Maker	Allows you to edit video files, edit photos, perform music montages and add voice comments with a microphone. It was mainly designed for Windows 7 users. Version 2.1 is the same as version 2.6 downloadable for Windows Vista, 7 and 8. Windows Movie Maker is no longer supported as of January 10, 2017, and is replaced by the 'Video Editor' feature in the Microsoft Photos app. Watch our basic editing guide for Video Editor here .
OpenShot Video Editor	It is a free resource that can be used on Windows PCs. With this all-round video editor, you can easily edit videos and apply special effects. It is the most comprehensive open source option, easy to use and most similar to Imovie. Download: www.openshot.org/
Powerpoint	An almost universal piece of software with OpenSource alternatives. Whilst we recommend that part of your participant's journey is to experience and use video-editing software, PowerPoint can be a good solution where you are working with groups of adults whose technical confidence is very low. If you choose to use this method you can check out our PowerPoint tutorial and case study in the resources section for more info. These were created for UK based training by Liverpool Community Spirit.

CHOOSING IMAGES

- Always use personal pictures or drawings and be always sure in order to avoid any copyright issues.
- Always ask participants to have permission from people appearing in their own pictures, especially if there are children and teenager. In such case it is possible to blur or blot out faces before inserting the picture into the editing program.
- If you use music, it must be licensed under Creative Commons or copyright free.

PRESENTING A SCREENING

Always take the time to show the videos that have been produced during the workshop.

Face to face, if possible, this can take the form of a separate celebratory event attended by all participants, or a final workshop session. Treat the screening with the respect and care it deserves. Each participant should feel that their work is valued.

Online it is advisable for all videos to be collected in a shared drive by the facilitator, and all shown from the facilitators computer, and from a location where the facilitator has strong and reliable internet, as sharing video in online meeting spaces can be difficult. You might choose to celebrate each creator by spotlighting them

at the beginning or end of their film. This can be combined with the giving of certificates via screen-sharing.

SHARING PERMISSIONS

Always remind participants they are the sole owner of their predicted videos, whilst ensuring that you are clear about the permissions they are giving you in relation to their work. We suggest to propose the 3 following options, in writing:

- a. Do not allow the publication of their digital storytelling videos outside the workshop.
- b. Allow publication for educational purposes: it means the facilitator is allowed to keep their videos and show them in other closed workshops.
- c. Allow publication and wider dissemination on the web.

Ask participants to clearly signal and submit their wishes to you via a written form. This permission (or lack of) should be held securely with the related video and the video never shared unless permission has been given.



PART FOUR

Case studies

The first describes our initial learning teaching training event in some detail, followed by other outlines of processes used. The case studies show how each course can have a different flavour, depending on the group involved, the precise purpose of the course, and the context. All of these influence how a course develops.



CASE STUDY 1:

DEPAL LEARNING TEACHING TRAINING EVENT ONLINE

OCTOBER 2020

The original plan was for 20 of us from Ireland, Italy, Greece, Spain and UK to gather for a week in May 2020. That plan changed, and 14 of us met online in October 2020. With the change of 'place', medium and context, new challenges arose, new ways of working were developed, and new possibilities emerged.

Fourteen people, some who had met before, and some who had not, worked together to create an online community, while mourning the loss of the planned shared social time, with all its incidental learning around our intentional learning. We set to work building connections with each other, and continued to pay attention to relationships and working participatively throughout the week.

We prepared for the first few days by sending out the link to the Zoom call, with a request to come prepared with pen, paper and markers, as well as sending some materials we would be using so that participants could print these out in advance. The work of setting the tone for the group begins with the first communications.

That **first day** began with an introduction to the week, drawing attention to our collective purpose, and to the experiential and experimental nature of the week long online workshop. We met for two sessions a day.

**** The length of sessions and allowance for breaks is more important than ever when working online. Our sessions lasted two hours, and we ran one in the morning and one in the afternoon for five consecutive days****

We used *Photolanguage* to begin to get to know who was in the group. This included the chance to meet in small groups, as well as hearing from everyone in the whole group.



From there we took some time to explore *listening*, and to reflect on and share about ourselves as listeners. We looked at some of the filters that we listen through, and experience ourselves being listened through. This was another opportunity to work in small

groups, meeting and getting to know others in the group, and building those connections.

Working online requires particular attention to breaks, and opportunities to move about. We timed the event so that there was a long break between morning and afternoon sessions, with a short piece of individual reflection work included during that first break.

We started the afternoon session with a check-in on energy levels and presence (On a scale of 1-10, how much of you is present here now? Depending on the response to that, a follow up question was prepared: What do you need to help you to become more present?) Participants worked in pairs to share and reflect on *Work Well Done*. This work continues to strengthen connections between participants, and takes the form of story telling. We also worked on feedback, with an emphasis on the impact of hearing the story, rather than on judging it, even positively. For example, "I was very moved by your story" rather than "That was a great story. You're so brave."

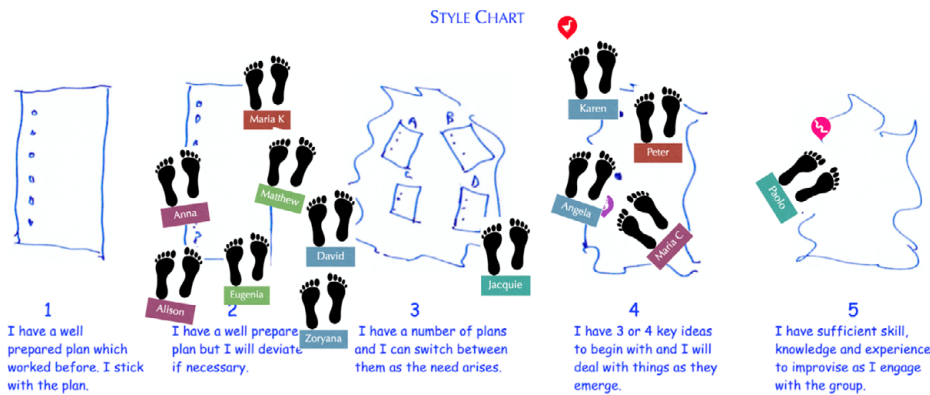


***** Giving feedback:
When sharing stories, you might like to encourage feedback which emphasises the impact on the listener of hearing the story *****

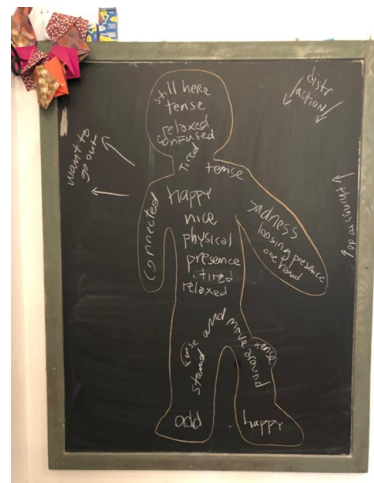
Our second main exercise that first afternoon was an exploration of facilitating and planning styles, which included people moving around in their own space, and showing their position on a google slide reached by a shared link. (We had prepared footprints with participants' names)

Day two began by checking in on the extent to which we were preoccupied (*From Preoccupied to Occupied*), taking an opportunity to move to becoming occupied together. When we want to become occupied as a group, what can sometimes stop us is that we are preoccupied. Taking a short time to check in can help with that.

Having got a sense of the group, and a taste of how we were working, now was a good time to get a sense of people's hopes for the rest of the week. We did that by imagining ourselves to the end of the week, going away feeling satisfied, and writing down three reasons for that. Through sharing those reasons, we built a picture of what we wanted the week together to look and feel like.

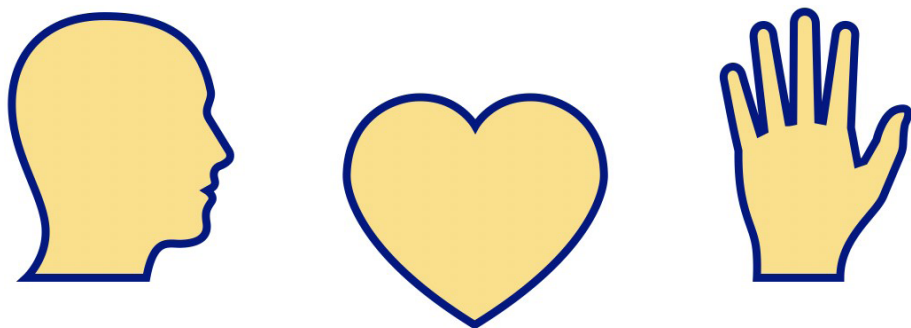


The first day concluded with *Body Talk*, a grounding exercise which can be used in order to allow participants to experience themselves in connection to the physical, even if they are just seeing each other onscreen.



I'm feeling satisfied because...		I feel that I can now run a digital storytelling workshop with others	I have a picture of how I will organise local workshop
I have acquired deeper knowledge and experience of what participatory knowledge is	I've changed or transformed positively through the learning	I have not wasted my time	we were able to demonstrate that it's possible to do a good job with limits
participatory learning was interesting online, and fun	I've learned a lot about working with a group online	understanding how the story has been created	discovered how useful digital storytelling is
learned new digital skills and can use them	to try out new experience with new people	To have more competence to be an online facilitator, and to improve the ones I already have	we made it, and now is time for hanging in cafe and farmer's market
broaden my horizons by meeting new people	I discovered new things about myself, like always	it was a privilege to engage with new colleagues	we had fun together
I had time to reflect and develop new thinking	I feel a renewed sense of confidence as a creative facilitator	I enjoyed being with the group	I reconnected with the people I like to work with
It was a chaotic experience	I have reinforced the human relations in team of DEPAL We have a sense of being a team		

We paid attention then to the manner of our communication with each other, exploring **Three Languages** and how we use them (check out the *DEPAL Guide* Chapter 4 for more on this). We practised listening for the three languages, and in the process built stronger understanding and connections with each other.



The work of the **afternoon session** brought a stronger focus on story, and how we use story in our work. We looked at a story in pictures (*Chick pics*) which is a problem posing story.

Then we all reflected on how we use stories in our work, using the **Story Diamond** (this is described in the *DEPAL Guide* Chapter 1).

As we prepared to focus on learning the process of digital story telling, we took a look at the ways we go about creating a positive group culture in the groups we work with.

Moving into Digital story telling in the following days, we continued to pay attention to how we were as a group, and individually. We used ways to check in, and check out. We took moments to reflect on the experience of an exercise. And before we concluded the workshop, we gathered our learning, and closed the group by hearing from everyone about what the week had meant to them. And you can get a sense of that by watching '*Learning From The Edge*', the video created that week.



CASE STUDY 2

DEPAL DIGITAL STORY TELLING WORKSHOP IRELAND JANUARY TO APRIL 2021

This course gathered 12 experienced group facilitators from a variety of contexts, and with varied experience of working with story, and with images. All had in depth knowledge and experience of working participatively with adults, and all were being introduced to this approach to digital story telling. For most it was their first experience of creating any sort of digital story. Some of the group knew each other well, others had never met before.

In planning this course, we took account of the great depth and breadth of experience in the group, at the same time as giving attention to building the group from the start. As we discovered from the feedback, this paid off in many ways.

The course took place online, over 6 x 2.5 hour sessions, with an extra session for those who could make it to create the audio for the story.

We learnt a huge amount through this process, not least was to ensure that all the images we were working with from the start were copyright free.

I. 29th January

- **Welcome**
- **Introduction:** The DEPAL project and this pilot
- **Photolanguage**
- **Object Stories**
- **Story Diamond**
- **Introduce theme for this digital story telling: The Year 2020.** Participants agree to upload images which capture something of their experience of 2020.

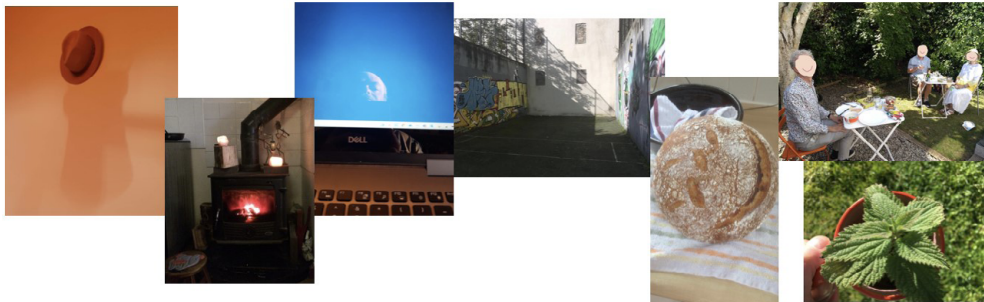
*Each session
lasted 2 hours
30 minutes*



II. 5th February 2021

Check-in: Notice how you are this afternoon. Draw that as a fountain. Show.

Slideshow of images uploaded by group. Notice what each image evokes for you.



Share your images in pairs, share about the meaning, feeling of images you contributed. Give each of your images a one-word title.

Hear all image titles. Create a list (share screen) with all the image titles. Now have a list of 36/40 words. (Note: this was probably a few too many)

Clairvoyant
Reflection
Domestic
Navigating
Vaccination
Fun-making
Debriefing
diamond
In-between
Now
Confetti
Golden-sun
Family
Life
Zoom
Celebration?
History
Breakthrough
Breathe
Outdoors
Family
Closer
Camp?
Rest
Buzz
Fresh

Individual stories Individually, take 20 minutes to write a story using as many of these words as possible.

Reflection on writing process

How was that writing process for you? Hear from everyone.

Hearing stories

Hear each person read their story. Simply listen.

What I found really challenging was ... easing the nerves of sharing the personal creative pieces that we worked on.

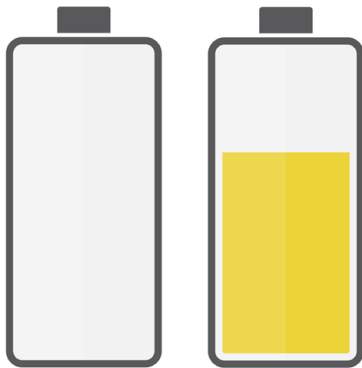
Declan, participant, Ireland

Reflection on telling and hearing stories

Closing second session: How are you now?

III. 19th February

Check-in Notice how you are this morning. Draw a battery outline, colour in to show how 'fully charged' you are this morning.



Re-connecting Think back over the first two sessions, what stayed with you? Take a few minutes to jot some notes, any insights, reflections on your experience so far. Share in groups of three.

Group stories:

In groups of 4, hear and see each other's stories. Create a group story out of the material in 4 individual stories.

Hear 3 group stories

Anything anyone would like to say?

IV. 12th March

Imperfections poem by Elizabeth Carlson. Where does it take you? Share in small groups

Share collaboration project inspired by this course: celebrate this creation.

Hear 3 group stories

Hear each story read by someone from another group. Just hear the stories, notice the feeling, the impact.

Collective story writing in the whole group

See 3 group stories on a page. Collective task now is to create a collective story using these three stories for material and inspiration. Take a few moments to jot down any ideas have for a starting point? Maybe a first line? ...

Begin to write, see three group stories on a page (put into chat); share screen with emerging story.

Someone read first draft aloud. What like about it? What might like to tweak?

Editing

Begin to put images to story: Look at images gathered in second week (follow link to google slides) as listen to reading of final collective story. Identify images which capture the feeling of a phrase, or sentence, paragraph.

All sorrows can be borne if you put them into a story
Isak Dinesan

V. 19th March

Check-in: On a scale of 1-10, how are you today?

Title for the story. Hear the story, think of possible titles for story.

Story board (We used Keynote/Powerpoint) with the text of the story across a number of slides. Continue putting images to the story, for a phrase, line, sentence, paragraph. (Combined with ongoing editing of story.)

Demonstrate

1. Create an iMovie project
2. Add images to project
3. Add images to timeline of project
4. Adjust time for each image, to fit with the text / audio
5. Add in transitions between images.

Title Consider options for title. Agree title? (Not quite)

Audio Plan for how to create audio for the collective digital story video. Arrange that those who can will meet on 2nd April as 'Audio sub-group'.

(Extra session) Audio session, 2nd April

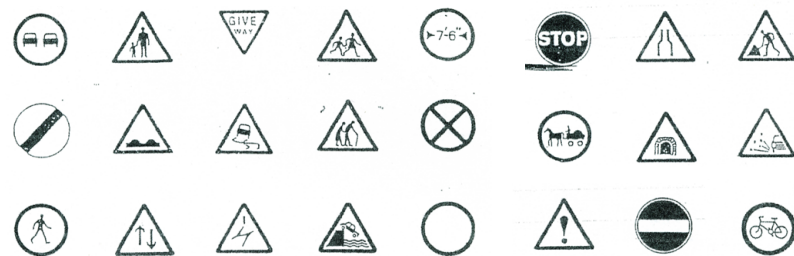
Heard some sound recordings

Discussed ways of completing audio, and work that would be involved to edit all the recordings. Decided to make a recording of reading of story in voices present.

Agreed who would read what. Rehearsed. Recorded through Zoom. Discussed use of other sound recordings, including birdsong and Dasha's guitar piece.

VI. 9th April

Check-in Road signs How are you this morning?



Catch up : Audio: what we did

View video so far

Agree title

Discussion of credits for the video

A look back at process from 29th January to today.

Individual reflection and then share in small groups.

- What possibilities do you see for how / where / why you might use Digital Story Telling? What elements might you use?
- What are some of the things you might change to adapt it to your purpose and context?

We gathered **evaluation** of the process through completion of the following Unfinished Sentences:

Now I need to know more about ... iMovie ! some of the technical aspects of putting it all together.

Paddy, participant, Ireland

What excites me now is simply the possibilities that I feel spilling out of my learning. The idea that people can be together in the zoom room, in breakout rooms, and belong, and how it can reach more people to have their voices heard in telling, listening, being heard, writing, reading and recording their stories in their own voices – there's a whole richness in it that I hadn't thought possible before.

Marie, participant, Ireland

Choose 5 or 6 which capture your experience

- What I found really challenging was ...
- What excited me was ...
- What excites me now is ...
- This process allowed me to ...
- Now I need to know more about ...
- One thing I would do differently is ...
- What surprised me was ...
- Through this process I realised (or learned) ...
- Another thing I'd like to say about this experience is ...



Closing To close, we invited participants to look around the space they were in, and to bring an object which captured something of what this experience had meant to them. We heard from everyone.

This process allowed me to ... explore writing, imagery and storytelling without having to 'improve', and gave space to turn off the inner editor.

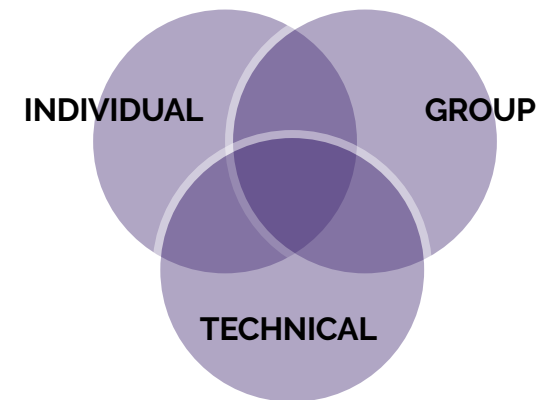
Stefanie, participant, Ireland

What excited me was meeting the people in the room and learning from everybody's voice, ideas, thoughts, even just learning about how everybody felt made me feel belonging to something, to some group of people.

Dasha, participant, Ireland

Through this process I realised (or I learned).. The power of the chaordic, there is a structure (nascent) trying to emerge. I experienced three overlapping circles. One is the individual circle and need to support people and also help hem find their story. The second is the group circle and the need to support the group and help them work on their collective story. The third is the technical circle to support the work of putting things together.

Frank, participant, Ireland



CASE STUDY 3

WHOLEHEARTED WOMEN: CREATIVE DIGITAL STORYTELLING AND WRITING PROGRAMME FOR WOMEN.

Our thanks to Marie Corcoran Tindill, facilitator of community development learning processes, who created and facilitated this course, and generously shared her notes with us afterwards.

This online course was delivered through Donegal Women's Network, funded by Donegal Local Development. It was facilitated by one of the participants in the Ireland pilot course.



Wholehearted Women: Creative storytelling and writing programme for Women

The course had 8 participants, all women living in Donegal. They met for the first time on this course. They participated using various devices, including one smart

phone, two tablets and five laptops. There were difficulties with participating fully through tablet and phone, and also difficulties caused by erratic internet and poor sound at times.

Each session lasted 2 hours and 15 minutes.

All participants loved the poem and storyline prompts and sharing stories in small groups.

Session 1: Getting to know one another in story

- **Check-in "Arriving"** Name, what part of Donegal you live in, and what let go of to arrive here today.
- **Photospeak** Choose photo, and tell story of what drew you to that photo.



- **Setting the scene**
 - About the course, creating safe and inclusive space, agreement.
 - On being wholehearted women
 - About story telling, wholehearted listening, story writing guidelines.
- **Story writing: Theme:** "My journey to this story telling and writing course"
- **Theme of course (DWN) Herstories of the past year (2020) in a time of Covid.** Possibilities for individual or group stories to be agreed.
- **Closing round: How are you now?**

Session 2: Writing stories about ourselves

- **Check-in Draw outline of battery.** How fully charged is your energy this morning?
- **Story prompt:** Poem by Elizabeth Carlson '**Imperfection**'. Write story "I am falling in love with my imperfections"
- **Hearing stories and responding**
- **Group agree to create one group story with video recording. Photos of experiences from past year to be gathered for next session.**
- **Object stories : From My Home To Yours.**
- **Close with story writing - write for 5 minutes**

Story prompt: "Standing in this doorway I'm laughing and I can't stop ..."

Hear stories. No feedback.

Session 3: Creating stories from our photos

- **Check-in:** South African poet Lebo Mashile poem: "You and I, We are the keepers of Dreams, We mould them into light beams..." What colour is your light beam, and how brightly is it shining this morning?
- **Watch a sample video story (from DEPAL website: Learning from the Edge)**
- **Slide show of collected photos of 2020.**
- **Story telling.** In small groups, tell each other stories of photos. Give each photo a one word title.

- **Story writing:** Using the one word titles, write a story about the past year.
- **Closing:** Haikus for fun. Show guidelines for writing haiku. Write one haiku and read aloud. Take a walk and write a haiku for fun in the week ahead.

She casts a cold eye
over tomato seedlings
wishes i grew mice...



Session 4: From individual to collective stories

- **Check-in** Anyone write any haikus? Zoom yoga. Where is your centre of wellness?
- **Listen to individual story, read by author. Second reading by another participant.** How does your story feel when read by someone else?
- **Reflection on stories and voices, stories going out into the world.**
- **Participatory decision making ... Divergence - struggle to create new shared understanding ... letting our story emerge - convergence.**
- **Creating two group stories** drawing on individual stories
Listening to two group stories
- **Closing: One word from everyone.** Did your centre of wellness hold today?

Session 5: Writing Our Final story draft on screen together

- **Check-in** 'Keep Going on' song (Bengsons) Q: What's keeping you going this morning?
- **Discussion: Structure, theme, tone, inclusivity of all, editing, sharpening two stories.**
- **Creating a single story**
- **Story board: matching photos to sections of text**
- **Closing: Are you keeping going? Or ready to pause / stop?**

Session 6: Creating Our Digital Story

- **Check-in: Road signs**
- **Planning reading of story: Who will read what?**
- **Practice runs**
- **Participants to record their line(s) and send in their recording.**
- **Closing: Where's your road sign now?**



Session 7: Recording for Our Digital Story

- **Check-in: Let's wake ourselves up.** Each person in turn suggest an action: everyone does this action five times.
- **Practice runs**
- **Suggestions and agreement on title for Story: Little Grinch Hearts Flourish - Donegal in a time of Covid.**
- **Some experimentation and trials to achieve a process for recording which would work**
- **Recap of the whole course, and evaluation.**
- **Closing: Participant reads poem: "I'm ready for the rest of this week"**

Everyone writes for 5 minutes a story of farewell to one another "I'm ready for these summer months..."

In a round, one person reads her story, calls on next, and so on.

All: listening quietly and when last person reads her story, everyone waves and we take our leave of each other.

CASE STUDY 4:

USING POWERPOINT FOR DIGITAL STORYTELLING (LIVERPOOL COMMUNITY SPIRIT)

Worked with groups of adults from a wide range of cultures, faiths, ages and abilities, including many with learning difficulties, most of whom had low IT skills and experience.



*** We opted to use **PowerPoint** as the tool for creating the digital storytelling videos.***



Accessibility: we discovered that everyone had access to PowerPoint. If it was not already on their device, we could point them to a free, almost identical version – WPS Office - which can be easily [downloaded via google apps here](#)



We produced simple PowerPoint presentations with **easy step by step** guides on how to use PowerPoint and create your personal digital story – *'How to make your Digital story using PowerPoint'*.



These guides were shared and further explained as part of our zoom sessions. Afterwards they were emailed to each participant so that they had a permanent reference in case they forgot any of the steps.



We created a **WhatsApp group** for the participants and facilitators, so we could **support each other and share** any problems and solutions that arose between each of the three sessions.

Advantages:

- Everyone to create a storyboard directly using the PowerPoint slides: just cut and paste your chosen pictures and add a small text box underneath.
- The order of the slides can be so easily swapped and changed as your personal story develops.
- There is a very easy to use facility to record your voice over each slide. This can be repeated as many times as you like.
- There is an even easier method to convert the PowerPoint presentation and audio into a good quality MP4 video format.

Therefore, the **editing process** is:

- Accessible
- Easy to use
- Controlled by each participant, making it personal, creative and empowering


The **Outcomes**:


Let the participants speak for themselves:

From a learner who had never used PowerPoint before:


 **The course has helped me massively, and made a huge difference. I will be using PPT to make more videos, it's really therapeutic".** *Allison Devine.*


From other inexperienced IT learners:


 **I learnt many new skills from this DEPAL course, I can't believe I am able to record on PowerPoint and turn it into a video".** *Bisakha Sarker.*

 **Who would have thought after my school experience I would be making this kind of video – I have really enjoyed this whole process".** *Jane Girvan*

From participants with learning difficulties:

 **I feel more confident to tell my story".**
Amanda Hesketh.

 **It is great to see Amanda, someone who is quite reserved and shy to be so expressive and create something so fantastic. This course has really helped her to bring out her personality and I hope she will continue to do this".**
Jeannette McHugh
(Directions Manager at Mencap Liverpool and Sefton), UK

 **I love my story and I think a lot of other people will too, I can't wait to put it in on the DEPAL website. I'm proud that I was able to create the story without a laptop and used an iPad".** *Sophie Gallagher.*

Check out the digital stories that each of them produced here:
<https://depalproject.eu/stories/>

- Allison Devine: "A Gardener's Tale"
- Sophie Gallagher: "Disneyland Paris"
- Amanda Hesketh: "What is important to me"
- Jane Girvan: "Believe in yourself and don't give up"
- Bisakha Sarker: "Just another click"

FINAL WORDS

The facilitator carries the responsibility of the whole process outlined in this toolkit. The way you prepare for and facilitate the process is a substantial component of the results the group will achieve.

Remember that digital storytelling production within a community under the participatory learning approach is a powerful tool for both individual and groups: be prepared, but also be prepared for the unexpected, which would be approached with the will to learn, with curiosity, with your mind wide open to what the group will show and teach you...



USEFUL RESOURCES

Understanding Participatory and Digital Learning: A Guide for Adult Educators, DEPAL <https://depalproject.eu/guide/>

How To Make Your Digital Story Using Powerpoint (Liverpool Community Spirit)

Example of a Collective Storyboard (Vardakeios, Greece)

For those interested in learning more about the digital storytelling process, the below resources from Erasmus + project 'iDig Stories' might be of interest:

<http://digistories.co.uk/tutorials/storytutormanual.pdf>

<http://idigstories.eu/online-toolkit>

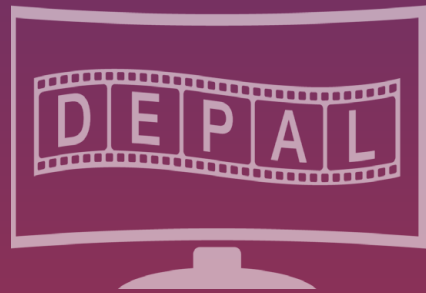
<http://idigstories.eu/online-digital-storytelling-in-practice/#page/1>

The iDig Stories project was a partnership between Diciannove, Anthropolis, Vardakeios, Zoe, Danmar Computers and Liverpool World Centre.

A useful photo pack 'More Photospeak' is produced by Partners in Faith info@partnersinfaith.ie

Available to download from www.partnersinfaith.ie





Digital Education
Participatory
Adult Learning