

**Tool 2.2**

Sharing Connection Stories

CLARITY Competence Area:

Nurturing connection to oneself, others and nature

GreenComp Competence Area:

Embracing Complexity in Sustainability

Why use this tool?

Storytelling allows us to understand ourselves and the world by using both emotions or bodily sensations, and rationality or logic. As such, storytelling helps us see the bigger picture and share our experience. This process is especially important for learners when they are experiencing strong emotions.

Humans who have not experienced an extreme event clearly associated with climate change mostly experience climate change and nature loss as slowly unfolding events. They get used to quieter forests and snowless winters as the number of birds dwindle and rain replaces snow. To become aware of these changes, the younger generation needs to connect with older generations and their memories. For example in Norway, they might then hear stories of ice-covered fjords and of the abundance of migratory birds arriving in spring.

Sharing connection stories helps diversify our understanding of connection to ourselves, others, and nature, by introducing various life experiences, different timeframes, and varied geographies. It also fosters a tangible connection between storyteller and listener, which can have a transformative impact on both.

Activity 2.2.1

Listening to stories from older generations

Overview

Learners ask parents, grandparents and/or other community members how they first connected to nature as children and how they connect with nature today. This activity can strengthen the social bonds between the learner and their community, and can give the learner new perspectives on how a person might experience connection with nature. The learner will practice their listening skills - skills that are essential for constructive communication and for future problem-solving.

Curriculum linkage

Language & Literature, History, Geography, Arts, Civics & Social Studies, Natural Science and Citizenship & Democracy.

Competences built

Empathy, presence, self-reflection, interconnectedness thinking, community building.

Prep Work

Familiarity with the concept of deep listening: The underlying idea is that when we listen deeply, we enter the conversation with a compassionate heart and curious mind. We observe, listen, and patiently let the other person share without interrupting or judging them.

**BASIC INFO****Age range:**

6+

Duration:

Two sessions of 45 minutes + homework

Group size:

Individual task

Level of difficulty:

Basic

Materials/space required:

Paper and pen, large sheets (if making collective mind maps), old newspapers/magazines (if making collage)

Location:

Indoors

Engagement of external stakeholders:

Yes



Competences/activities to practice first by the teacher:

Practice tool 3.3 “Listening”, particularly activity 3.3.2 “Deep Listening to Others”. If you are in a hurry, don’t worry – on the next page, you’ll find a short description of how to do a short exercise helping learners to listen more deeply.

Steps in the activity

1. Introduction
2. Selecting an Elder
3. Recording the story
4. Sharing the stories

Step 1: Introduction (20 min. in class)

1. Introduce the concept of deep listening to the learners, as in activity 3.3.2.
2. Invite the learners to work together in ‘telling & listening’ pairs for an exercise where each learner talks for 4 minutes without interruptions. Announce when 4 minutes have passed and tell them to switch roles. Suggestions for topics to talk about:
 - a. their favorite hobby
 - b. their favorite season
 - c. their favorite place in nature
 - d. their favorite outdoor activity
 - e. what fascinates and inspires them most in nature
3. Close the exercise by asking the learners how it felt to both tell and listen.

Step 2: Selecting an Elder (25 min. in class)

1. Invite learners to identify an elder in their community. To assist them in identifying an elder, you can recommend them to think about people in their community (e.g., family members, neighbors, local celebrities...) who belong to an older generation and who they find inspiring.
2. Optional: Invite learners to prepare a mind map individually by answering the following questions:
 - a. What inspires you about those individuals?
 - b. What can we learn from older generations?
3. Invite learners to choose one elder.

Step 3: Recording a story (at home)

1. Invite learners to ask their chosen elder to share a story. The role of the learner is to listen deeply.



2. Suggest to learners that they can use the following prompts to encourage their chosen storyteller to share their story:
 - a. Do you have any childhood memories of being in nature?
 - b. Can you describe your connection to nature as a child and as a grown-up?
 - c. How has this connection changed over time?
3. Invite learners to take notes or record the story, in case they may want to write it down later.

Step 4: Sharing the stories (45 min. in class)

1. Do a round of sharing in the classroom where you encourage learners to retell the part of the story that resonated the most with them. You can ask learners how this part resonated with them. They can respond to this question either individually by writing, drawing or talking, or collectively by making a word map or collage together.
2. Optional: Invite one or more elders to come to your school or university and share their story with all.



Dos and don'ts

Do:

Tell the learners to remember to ask for consent for sharing the story with the group, and particularly if they will be recording anything.

Adaptations:

We invite you to adapt this activity to the specific needs of your learners, including by taking into account their neurodiversity. When adapting tools and activities for neurodivergent learners, please note it is not about treating others how you want to be treated, but how they want to be treated. Ask, listen, and stay open to different ways of learning and engaging.

Offer alternative communication methods. If a learner is non-verbal, prefers writing, drawing, or using AAC (augmentative and alternative communication), they can prepare written questions or visual prompts to share with their elder.

For learners who experience anxiety or social difficulties, having a familiar support person (adult or peer) during the interview or sharing phase can reduce stress.

References

This activity was designed by Climate Creativity.



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