



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.



Thomas, M., Sorvala, L., Williams, A., Singleton, A., Maddock, C., Morgan, D., Murray, T., & Musselwhite, C. (2024). Co-creating a climate comic book: reflections on using comics in intergenerational research and engagement. *Journal of Global Ageing*, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1332/29767202y2024d000000011>

Walker, C., Van Holstein, E., & Klocker, N. (2024). Young people at a crossroads: Climate solidarity through intergenerational storytelling. *Geographical Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-5871.12668>

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Activity 2.2.2

Tell your climate connection story

Overview

This activity will help learners write a personal story of connection to nature and to climate change. In their personal story, learners can include elements such as their memories, sensations, emotions, values, reflections, knowledge, visions, hopes and dreams. Reflecting on climate change and their own perspective through creative writing can help learners become more aware of their own personal connection to nature, and can help them explore and cope with their own feelings. The activity also includes collaborative steps, which open up a space for the learners to talk to their peers about the complex effects of climate change and to practice expressing their own perspectives in relation to those effects.

Curriculum linkage

Language and literature, Geography, Art, Natural Science.

Competences built

Empathy, presence, self-reflection, interconnectedness thinking, authenticity.

Prep Work

Try out the exercise on your own before engaging with the learners.

It can be challenging for learners to come up with a story of their own, and from experience the learners need to connect with their own emotions and values, as



BASIC INFO

Age range:

7+

Duration:

90 minutes

Group size:

Flexible

Level of difficulty:

Basic

Materials/space required:

Paper and pen. Large sheets of paper or board if making collective mind maps

Location:

Flexible

Engagement of external stakeholders:

Not necessarily. A local storyteller could be invited for inspiration.



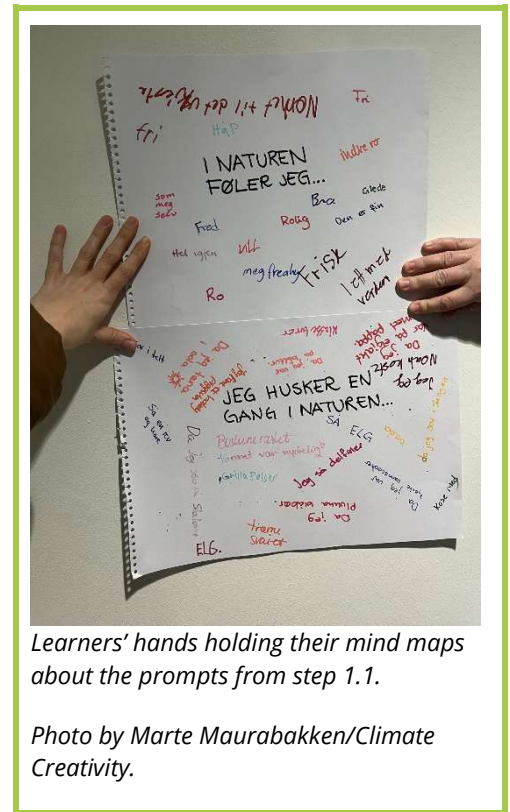
well as the stories of others before writing their own story. Before writing a connection story, it would be useful to explore some other CLARITY tools with the learners, especially activities on listening, emotions and values, for example:

- Activity 3.3.2 : Deep listening to others
- Activity 2.2.1 : Listening to stories from older generations
- Activity 3.5.1 : Practicing your signature strength
- Activity 1.2.3. Climate emotions symbols

Optional: Bring objects in the classroom that illustrate the theme of connection to nature and climate change. For example: a plant whose habitat is shrinking, art pieces, a plank from a house broken by a hurricane/a flood, a plant whose habitat will grow, or a stick with leaves that sprout earlier this year than just a few decades before.

Steps in the activity

1. Practice free writing
2. Establish climate connections
3. Write and share your climate/nature connection story



Learners' hands holding their mind maps about the prompts from step 1.1.

Photo by Marte Maurabakken/Climate Creativity.

Step 1: Practice free writing (25 min. in class)

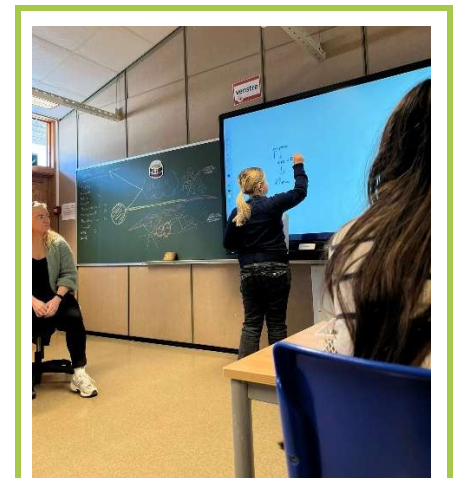
1. Introduce the concept of free writing to learners. The learners can write whatever they want, there are no restrictions or 'wrong' responses, only exciting ideas. (This first step is here to let the learners write freely, and to think about nature. The connection to climate change does not have to appear in the stories yet, it will emerge in steps two and three.) You can suggest the following prompts:
 - a. I remember one time in nature...
 - b. In nature, I feel...
 - c. When it comes to nature, I value/care for...
 - d. I hope...
2. Optional: for learners who are not inspired, invite them to write about one of the objects illustrating connection to nature or climate change, which you brought into the classroom.
3. Invite learners to work with the prompts in one or a mix of the following ways:



- a. **Individually** by writing for a set amount of time (3 min) in response to each prompt. In that case, do close the exercise by asking each learner to
 - b. highlight a word or sentence they wrote and inviting them to share their highlighted word or sentence with the group.
 - c. **Collectively** by making mind maps together. Put posters with the prompts on tables/walls/the floor in the classroom or in a suitable outdoor space. Provide colourful markers, and encourage the learners to walk around and write/draw on the posters. In that case, do close the exercise by summing up the key points from each poster in a non-judgmental way. Working collectively is recommended for children and youth from 6 to 18 years old.
4. After giving learners the prompt, and before they start writing, ask them to do a simple movement with their hands for a few seconds, such as:
 - a. Twisting their wrists
 - b. Rubbing their hands together
 - c. Clapping and shooting one hand forward.

Step 2: Establish climate connections (20 min. in class)

1. Introduce learners to the definition of climate resilience, as explained in the teacher's guide.
2. Invite learners to go back to their favorite prompt and reflect on the connection between their response and climate resilience.
3. Invite learners to brainstorm in pairs or small groups, while you can support any pairs/groups struggling to see connections.
 - a. Take care to ask about and expand on **what emerges from the learners themselves**, rather than steering their thoughts and texts in any particular direction. When you help them, use your knowledge of climate change in combination with what the individual learner writes or talks about.
 - b. If they still struggle to connect their initial text to climate change and resilience, you can help them further through questions such as these:
 - i) The parts of nature you wrote about in your text - how will it be affected by climate change?
 - ii) The parts of nature you wrote about in your text - what might reduce their climate resilience? What might strengthen their climate resilience?
 - iii) Who and/or what can strengthen climate resilience?



Learners reflect on connections to climate change, writing mind maps on a screen.

Photos by Marte Maurabakken/Climate Creativity.



- iv) What examples of climate resilience can you find that are related to the text you wrote?
 - v) What examples of climate resilience in nature can you think of?
4. When each group has established some connections to climate change, invite learners to re-use their favorite prompt, in relation to climate change, by writing about this connection for 10 minutes.

Step 3: Write and share your climate connection story (45 min. in class)

1. Introduce the framework of a connection story, by highlighting that it is a personal story (about them!) and could include elements such as the learner's memories, experiences, sensations, emotions, values, knowledge, ideas, reflections, hopes and dreams.



Learners in the outdoors, brainstorming their personal stories together in pairs on step 3. One learner is holding a small rock in their hand. A teacher is talking with one of the learners. One learner holds up a pen together with a cone they found while brainstorming.

Photos by Marte Maurabakken/Climate Creativity.

- a. Continue to focus and expand on **what emerges from the learners themselves**. If they still struggle to connect their initial text to climate change and resilience, you can help them further through questions such as these:
- i) In relation to climate change - what do you hope? Fear? Dream of? Do? Feel? Work towards? Cooperate with? Fight? Experience? Avoid?
 - ii) Climate change might affect the parts of nature that you wrote about earlier. What does this make you think or feel?



- iii) Do you know about anyone fighting for or supporting the parts of nature that you wrote about? What do you think and feel about that?
 - iv) Which aspects of climate change, or which change-affected geographical areas, makes you feel anything? What does it make you think about?
2. Let the learners discuss in pairs how to develop their last response to their favourite prompt into a climate connection story.
 3. Support learners as they work on their stories individually.
 4. Close this exercise by inviting learners to share their stories with the group.



Dos and don'ts

Do:

Focus on letting the learners express themselves in text. Focus on encouraging and expanding on the learners' thoughts, rather than judging the text.

Adaptations:

Young learners:

To make the activity engaging for young learners you can dress in a way that illustrates the theme of connection to nature, or use objects instead of prompts for the free writing practice. You could bring objects to class or let the learners go out into nature and bring back some nature elements (stones, sticks, leaves etc.) themselves.

University level:

This activity can be used as a simple pass/fail assignment at university level. If you choose to use this as a graded exercise, remember to make it clear to the learners from the beginning that this will be a graded assignment and that the stories will be read by the teacher.

The activity can be used in a literature course, and include examples in literature on the topic of "departing from anthropocentrism". It could open a discussion on traditions and norms of seeing nature as good or evil, and on how we distort our image of nature based on aspects of our own culture.

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References

This activity was designed by Climate Creativity.

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