

Smell & Tell

Stepping Stones : Teambuilding & Empowerment; Body, Movement and Senses; Storytelling

Materials : incl. materials

Type of exercise : oral & written

Duration exercise : >60 min.

Objectives

The learner can develop and tell a story.

Materials

- 4 non-transparent bags per team
- Different ingredients (see preparation below)
- 4 small pieces of paper per person
- Paper and pens

Preparation

- Divide the bags into 4 categories. Write the number on each bag.
- For each category, invent a 'recipe': be creative, mix all sorts of ingredients. Here are some examples.
 - Bag 1 coffee, pepper & curry
 - Bag 2 toothpaste & soap
 - Bag 3 scented candles & mint
 - Bag 4 shampoo & vinegar

Instructions

- Divide the group into teams of four learners.
- Put a bag from each category, the 4 pieces of paper per person and pens on each table.
- Tell them to take bag 1.
- Give them the instructions: Close your eyes, open the bag, don't look at it, don't speak, just smell. Think of a character: a person or an animal, real or imagined. Close the bag and pass it to the next learner.

- After smelling the first bag, everybody writes down the character the smell makes them think of, without telling it to the other members of the team.
- And so on with the other bags.
 - Bag 2: *Think of a place.*
 - Bag 3: *Think of an action, a verb.*
 - Bag 4: *Think of an emotion.*
- After the four rounds, give each team time to share their characters, places, actions and emotions.
- Collect all the papers per category. You have now 4 piles of folded papers.
- In every team, let a learner choose a paper from the 'character pile', another from the 'place pile', a third from the 'action pile' and the fourth from the 'emotion pile'. Each group has now a character, a place, an action and an emotion.
- Let each team create a story based on these four elements. Learners can do this verbally or in writing, or even draw it.
- Each team tells its story in front of the class.

Variant

Beginners: use 2 bags, e.g. a character and a verb. Ask learners to make sentences.

Tips for the instructor

- Ask the learners to listen to your instructions carefully.
 - You are not allowed to look into the bags during the whole process.
 - You cannot share your ideas before everyone has smelled the bag.
- Instructions must be clear; repeat them several times, mimicking closed eyes and smelling.
- Give examples for each category, e.g. Does this smell make you think of a boy going to school, a grandma somewhere in Russia, a bear looking for honey, etc.
- The more the smells are unrecognizable, the more they stimulate the imagination.
- Be very organized with the bags and the papers: be careful not to mix them.
- Go slowly, step by step, otherwise you will be lost and the learners will be too.
- If necessary, remind the learners of the structure of a story: beginning to end, with challenges/problems and helpers/saviors.

Closing up

- Bring everyone together for the final activity.

The Alternative Ways toolkit has been developed by GO! onderwijs van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap (Belgium), Elan Interculturel (France), Arbeit und Leben NRW (Germany), De Talentenschool (The Netherlands) and Storytelling Centre (The Netherlands). The project is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. Our website: www.alternativeways.eu.

- Discuss what was in the bags, ask them what they think it was and reveal the content.
- Put all the papers in one box. One by one, invite the learners to pick a paper and portray the word. Let the others guess.
- Discuss the difficulties encountered by the learners during the exercise.
- Emphasize how they made up all the stories together as the ideas came from everybody.
- Write down and explain new words.

Read more in our manual at www.alternativeways.eu

Language skills / Linguistic performance

- Listening
- Reading
- Speaking
- Writing

Linguistic competence/knowledge

- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Sentence construction
- Oral language skills

Social-emotional skills and competences

- Communication skills
- Empowerment
- Fun
- Imagination, creativity and learning to learn
- Narrative thinking