



Navigating with Sinbad

Guidelines for organizing storytelling practice sessions,
(informal) face-to-face learning groups and/or collegial
exchange



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Introduction

Dear colleague,

You might want to organize informal storytelling practice sessions with colleagues, either in your own Kindergarten or school or with a group of interested peers in your (teacher) environment. The SINBAD team has developed an e-course which you can either follow yourself first and/or share with your colleagues and then go to practice together.

The guidelines you are reading here are first steps to help you on your way.

As SINBAD aims to offer a new teaching methodology to enhance competence acquisition and development, some pedagogical and didactical aspects might be new to you and your colleagues. These guidelines give you an idea and our e-course is a friendly guide through all of it.

Worksheet

We have prepared a worksheet (see appendix) that you might want to try out when you have followed the suggestions of these guidelines.

Good luck and have fun!

The SINBAD Team

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Preparing a learning group and practice sessions

a. Welcoming and preparing workshop participants

Whatever group you belong to or want to organize, we advise you to choose participants with a similar background ((pre-) school teachers, volunteers etc.) to be able to tailor your session to their background and potential needs to some extent.

Send them a welcome mail where you introduce yourself with an appetizer fragment of the story you might want to tell when you welcome the group. Give it a personal touch (“This is a story that has stuck with me since my youth...”).

Invite them to bring / prepare a favorite story to the session, preferably learned by heart. Let them know that their story will be a part in the session.

Preferably, the number of participants should not exceed 15, to be able to give appropriate attention and enough chance for everyone to be heard during and after the activities / exercises we propose in these guidelines and in the e-course.

b. Preparing the session environment

Use a large room – preferably in a neutral environment, so maybe better not the school or office. It is better to find ‘a third place’ where people are at ease. There should be enough space to create a circle of chairs and work in small groups without being distracted by the others.

A ‘conference’ or classroom set-up will create the wrong mood. The first will have people checking their smartphones, the second gives people a chance to hide behind others... A circle provides continuous (eye) contact with others.

The room should also have at least one empty wall to be able to attach drawings / post-its to it. It will also make the room more colorful and inspiring.

Prepare enough material to work with: (color) pens, paper, post-its, tape etc.

Make sure that there is enough to drink and provide small snacks / sweets to make your participants feel welcome.

c. The length of the session and activities

Given the information you want to convey and the activities/exercises, we advise you to spend half a



day (4 hours), but preferably 6 hours for a session. As alternative, you can also think about a sequence of sessions, e.g. 2 hours a week.

Be also aware that you take regular (tea / coffee) breaks to give the participants a chance to let information or an exercise sink in and maybe get some fresh air.

d. Preparing yourself for the workshop

If you want to tell stories yourself (either to warm up your colleagues or to use as examples), try them out at home first or in front of a small group. Ask for feedback, maybe you will have to replace one or two activities / stories for your purpose. Look at the examples we provide in the [e-course](#) and the [Education Pack](#).

Your welcome story should contain at least one or more (EU) competences. We offer an extensive [choice of stories](#) at the webpage as well.

General Tips

After longer breaks (e.g. lunch) start with an energizer or another icebreaker to get the (storytelling) fun and flow and attention back. You will find some links at the end of these guidelines.

When your participants prepare / craft stories and tell them, invite the group to applaud for each and everyone.

If you plan more sessions, ask your colleagues to do some homework and practice parts practice parts of the e-course (e.g. presenting the story / crafting a story)

The Practice Session

a. Starting the session

Start the session by letting all present write their individual expectations of the session on post its in one or two sentences. Let everyone tell it to the group in one or two sentences and then paste it to the wall. It will help you all to evaluate by the end of the day and will also be helpful in preparing and adjusting other sessions.



Portrait Circle, an 'icebreaker'

This is an opener that creates trust and will bring them in a story mood. Invite all to form an inside circle (facing outwards) and an outer circle (facing inwards). Be sure that everyone has a partner in front. Hand out A4 papers and a color pencil.

1st round: Let the draw a 10 second portrait of each other and ask each other's name. Write down the name and write down a question connected to stories (don't ask, just write down!)

2nd round: all move to the next person in the circle, the same ritual.

3rd round: all move to the next person in the circle, the same ritual.

After this each person should have 3 drawings of him/herself. Each chooses either a drawing or a question (and sometimes it will be both on one page). Only **one** paper remains in hand when you all sit down in the circle.

Then everyone says his/her name and tells why he/she has chosen the portrait / the question. It will reveal a little bit more about the person than just stating 'what' they are.

This is one icebreaker. You might know some (and other energizers) yourself. If not, look in the appendix, there you will find links to more.

b. Your story

Tell the story you have prepared and ask the group which competences they can perceive. Maybe write them on a flip over or whiteboard.

c. The EU key competences

Introduce the EU key competences. Here they are in short:

1. Communication in the mother tongue
2. Communication in foreign languages
3. Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology
4. Digital competence
5. Learning to learn
6. Social and civic competences
7. Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
8. Cultural awareness and expression



You might have a conversation with your group of what has been perceived as a competence and what the EU proposes as key competences.

Keep in mind that the basic idea behind competence-based education is to help children to develop and construct their own knowledge, and to be able to apply this knowledge successfully in different situations / contexts.

You can find an extensive description of the key competences in the [Pedagogical Framework](#).

Discuss together: How are these key competences related to stories?

d. Their stories

Let all tell which story they have brought to the session and why. Reasons could be: favorite (childhood) story, a certain theme one finds interesting, a current event (news, neighborhood), a competence they would like to promote, general interest in what children like...). Paste the story titles and motivation to the wall.

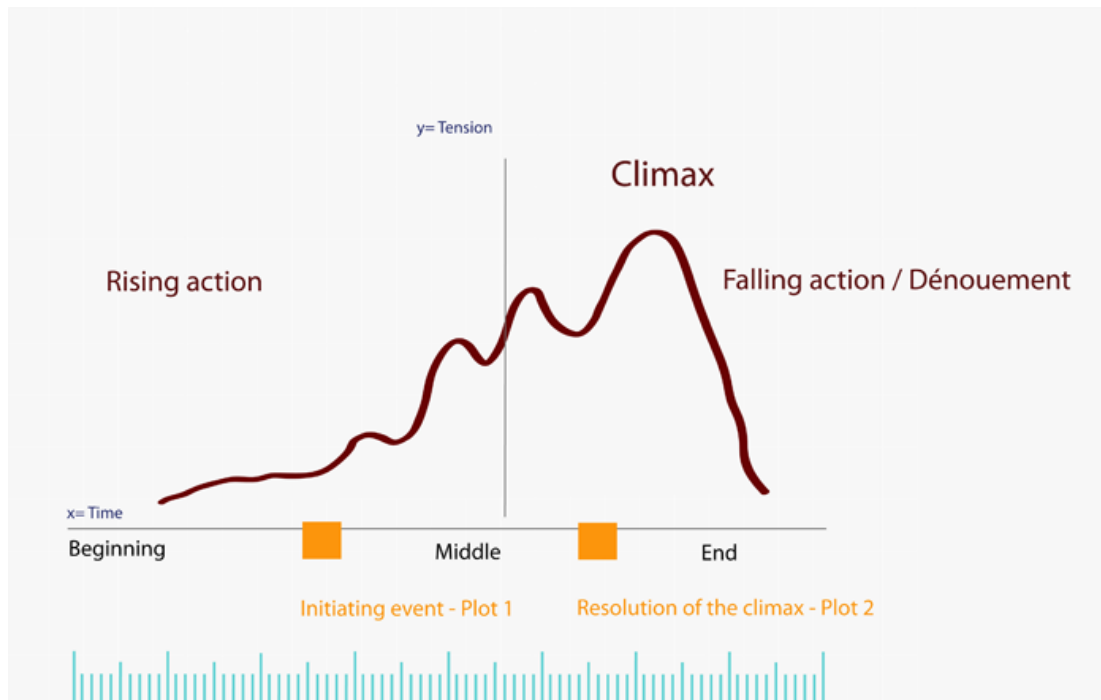
e. What is a story (story structure)?

Stories have clear structures. The best known is the folk story structure, which is a universal structure and is been used all over the world for thousands of years.

Either take your own story or the story of Little Red Riding Hood as an example to explain the 5 steps within the (traditional) story structure.

You might point out that the stories your colleagues brought, follow the same lines.





f. Remembering a story: How to work with story skeletons

Reading a story is not the same as telling a story. When you read a story your eyes will be on the pages, you will read the text as it is. When you tell a story you are always connected with your audience and you are able to improvise with your text.

Look at the [videos](#) we have developed to look at the differences (click the button 'Presenting a story').

To remember a story you want to tell can be done using story skeletons. In our Education Pack and e-learning course we offer two possibilities:

3-part Skeleton

Beginning – Problem – Solution

5-part Skeleton

Beginning – Problem – Climax – Outcome – Resolution

Try to find these 'markers' in your story. Then try to make drawings of these situations on A4 paper (see photo). They don't have to be art, but they will help you to describe these moments more vividly.





g. Telling a story using a story skeleton

When your group is ready with drawing their skeletons and some quick rehearsal, you can invite them to tell their story using their story skeletons. In the workshops we have given so far this works very well (see photos). You might even think of making videos of each other and watch them back. Have a look what could be improved...



h. The four pillars of storytelling

When you prepare a story you should be aware of the four pillars of storytelling. If you want to be able to tell your story well in your own words, these are the four necessary aspects that make (telling) a story enjoyable for you and your audience, as proposed by Irish storyteller Claire Murphy:

Love your story

Believe your story

Know your story

Make it your own – Find your own voice

Use different perspectives to tell the story, different voices and use your body language. You find many exercises in the [Presentation tool kit](#) (click on Presenting the Story – Presentation tool kit – Exercises).

Don't forget to point out: Everyone presents a story differently, only by practicing one can find the own way. So use the chance to practice as much as possible in pairs or small groups, by the end of the session you can also invite the participants to tell the story in front of the whole group.

i. Involving children: Learning styles and inviting stimuli

Always consider that children have different learning styles: they can be more inclined to either visual stimuli or auditory stimuli; they can be kinesthetic (tactile, mobile). Be sure that all their senses are addressed.

Involving children actively can be done in different ways: by images, sounds, sound effects, music, or props like dolls (dolls can be 'mediators', the teacher can also tell through a doll...).

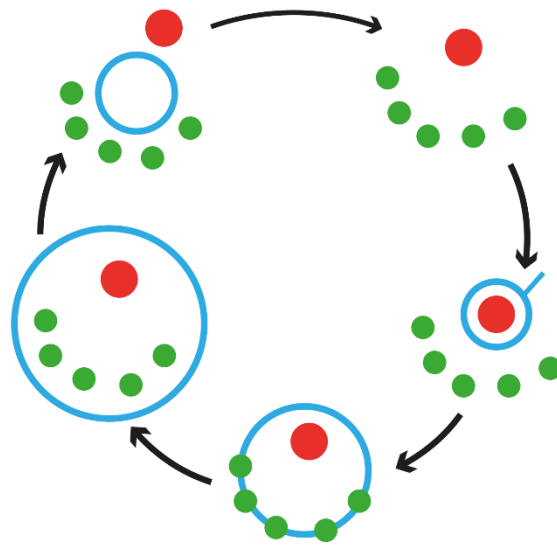
One can also invite the children to provide sound effects at certain agreed points in the story.

Have a look at what else you can do in our [videos](#) of the e-course (the button 'Involving children' – Sinbad story – Example Activities).

j. How to 'work' with children with a story

Another storyteller (Katrice Hoirsley) sums it up nicely (see also illustration). There is the story, the teller and the audience. When the teller starts he/she becomes the story. When he/she succeeds to involve the audience, teller and audience are within the story. And when the story has ended, it is between the teller and the audience and can be examined, analyzed and questioned by all.





Think of questions you could ask the stories you have told each other. Which of them could you ask the children? We have suggestions in the worksheet.

You could also think of possible tasks to give to children to work on (and 'play' with) competences while working on a story. Which kinds of tasks are fit to develop which competence? You will find quite some examples connected to stories from our [story collection](#).

What could you do to make the children also competent storytellers: re-tell a story, re-enact the story as a group, make a video, a visual story... Have a look at the [videos](#) (Acquiring Storytelling Competences – Exercises and further) or consult the [Education Pack](#).



k. Establish your own Storytelling Project

You have been busy together for a few hours and you might have found colleagues who would like to go on with developing storytelling skills. Make appointments for other sessions. Maybe you will decide to put up a project in your own school or take it (again, with colleagues) to a regional level.

Give us feedback

If you have suggestions based on the SINBAD resources or the e-course, please share them with us and your colleagues on our SINBAD Forum page. We really appreciate feedback, collaboration and co-creation. It will keep this project alive, and thus storytelling in competence development.

Certified Course + Workshops

For those who seriously want to become competent teachers-storytellers and want to take it to a higher plan:

Register for our **2-day Storytelling Practice Course** where we will train you properly. You will also receive a certificate, no matter if you want to follow it within further formal education or just out of interest.

The certification of the course follows ECVET principles (European Credit System of Vocational Education and Training) and is based on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). You can find the [contact address](#) for your country on our website.

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Appendix

Icebreaker exercises

<http://bit.ly/28Z07qo>

<http://bit.ly/28YR7jO>

<http://bit.ly/28XKCxy> (pdf)



Worksheet

Your Story

Choice criteria could be:

Your favorite story, a competence you want to promote, a current event (in the media, in your neighborhood, at your school), a theme you want to draw attention to, a topic your children are interested in...

Story Structure and Story Skeletons

Describe shortly the elements in the five most important parts of a story:

Setting - Crisis/Rising Action - Climax – Falling Action – Resolution

What are the elements in a 3-part story skeleton and in a 5-part skeleton?

How can you actively involve children during storytelling?

Which learning styles do you know and which activities/props would ideally correspond with these styles? Think of images, music, sound, props... and what else?

After the story is told – What kind of questions can be asked?

Think of questions related to e.g. understanding, meaning, values, moral, but also to individual experiences (or similar stories) of the children.

Which competence-related tasks can you think of?

Direct and indirect references: A competence can be derived directly from a story; Stories can be used as an occasion to have a conversation about a competence. Both can be used to design tasks.

