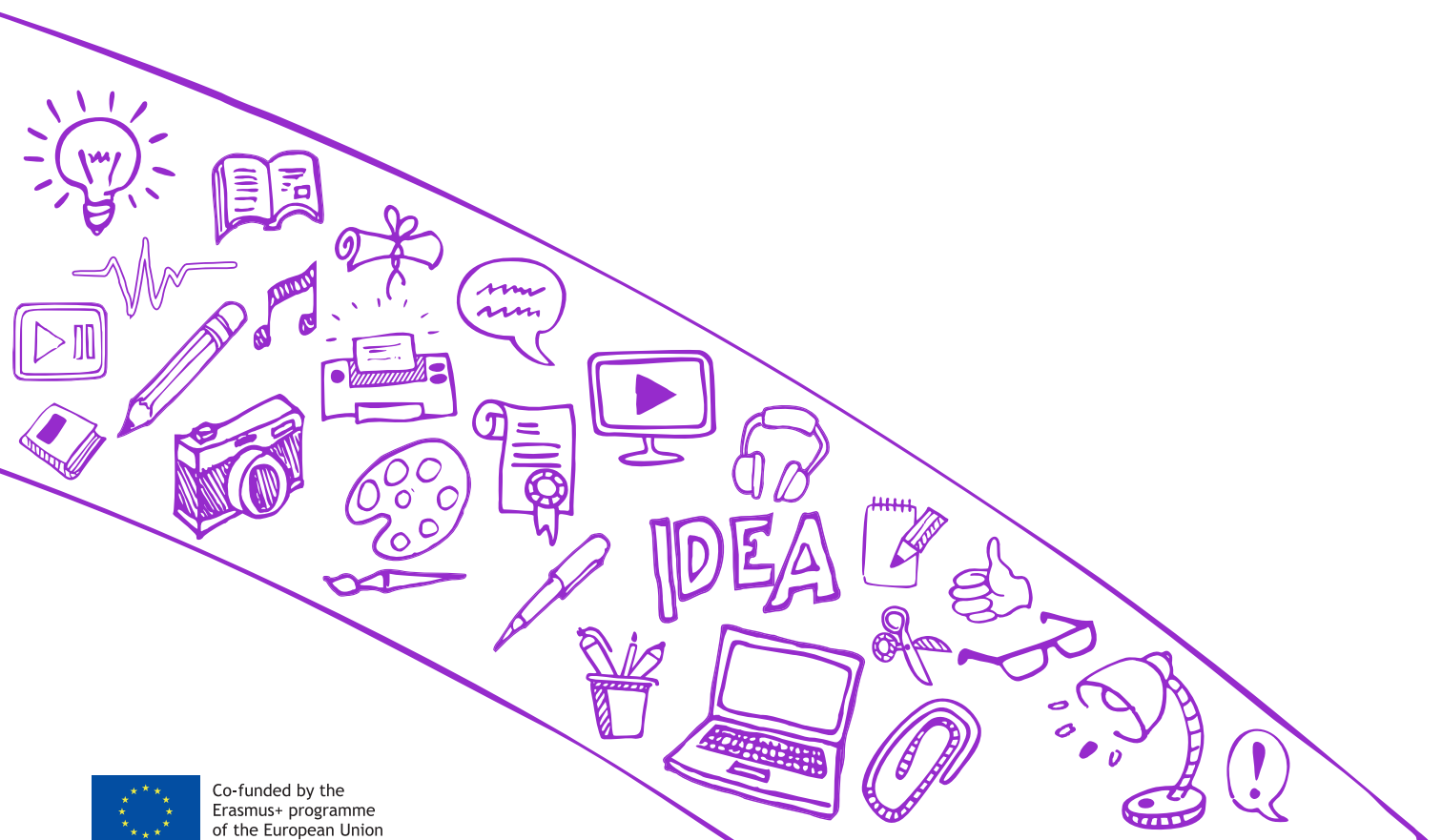


Module 3

Exploring ways of developing your creative practice: Creative writing



Course description

Below you can find a template in order to structure the courses for each module. The duration of the entire module is 4 hours including 2 x 15 minute breaks and 30 minute lunch. Please use and fill the template below with the foreseen activities. Use one template for one activity.

Activity name

1. Writing Warm-Ups
2. Writing Props - helps create stories
3. Stream of consciousness writing
4. Ordinary into Extraordinary
5. Create your story outline
6. Describe your day with creative writing
7. Single senses

Addressing competencies

- Creativity
- Critical thinking
- Self-awareness
- Self-efficacy
- Convergent and divergent thinking

Learning outcomes

- Enhance creative writing abilities
- Practice developing storytelling abilities
- Practice describing specific details
- Practice stream of consciousness writing

Concrete steps for the implementation

We invite learners to nurture their creative powers by addressing the following 3 questions in one artistic project using creative writing as the impulse for the project

1. What is our artistic project?
2. What are the individual and group tasks? What is the impact we would like to achieve?
3. What have we learnt about our creative powers and what has been improved?

For specific steps for each activity, please see below.



Exercise 1

Writing warm-ups



15 minutes



Write a short story **describing an object** in the room in detail, without saying what it is. A more difficult version is to write about something not in the room. The goal here is to practice describing the specific details of this object.

Descriptions can include all the senses: **audio, visual, tactile, smell** for example.

Write a letter to a partner, one word at a time, and swapping letters with that partner, quickly. Try not to overthink it but enjoy the surprising results!

Repeat the exercise and see where it takes you.

Exercise 2

Writing props



20 minutes

When we want to get something unique and different from young people, we can resort to exercises that are also used in creative writing.

One idea is to **place a picture** in front of the participants and ask them to think about it for two minutes and then write a story, which they shall then share with others.



Another way to achieve this is to simply **give them the theme** of the story.

A third way is to **give them the first sentence** upon which they need to build a story.

You will not believe how many different stories one can get from just one picture, using different methods or approaches.



Try using a picture of the **DiARC cards**: their abstract nature will induce more creativity.

<https://nmct.eu/creativecards/>

Exercise 3

Stream of consciousness writing



25 minutes

Another example of an activity that yields very similar results is **stream of consciousness writing**. Some writers use this process which they call "**morning pages**".

Every morning, when they get up, they **write down 3-4 pages of everything and anything** that comes to their mind (instead of 3-4 pages, it is also possible to write for 20 minutes).

In doing so, they write sentences that come to mind at a given moment as quickly as possible - without stopping and without the intention of creating meaningful text. Only when they are finished (after 20 minutes or when they finished the third page) can they read what they have written.



The same principle can be used as an activity in the process of storytelling. **Participants describe their stream of consciousness for about twenty minutes**, without stopping. When they are finished, they each read their own writings by themselves.

From that writing, they **select a topic or sentence** upon which they begin a story.

Exercise 4

Ordinary into extraordinary



15 minutes



Write a **two-page story** about something really mundane and unremarkable and make it dramatic, suspenseful or intriguing (i.e. what you had for breakfast, your journey to class, putting something in your bag).

Prompts can either be given or generated by the speaker and should be true (even if there is some exaggeration).

Practice making something special and interesting, even when it does not seem like it.

Try writing it from different points of view, for example:

- The egg on your breakfast plate
- The light bulb in the school corridor
- The discarded apple in your bag

Exercise 5

Create your own story outline



40 minutes



Review of the videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AkaDkGgmeS8&t=6s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CbY-ljaID1Y>

Based on the video you have just watched, sit in a quite yet inspirational place, and **start working on the outline of your story** based on the steps and elements in the video.

Think about the **Beginning, Middle** and **End**. Do they need to be structured in that order?

Exercise 6

Describe your day with creative writing



20 minutes



All you have to do is sit down and **describe your day** – starting with waking up – as if you were writing it about another person.

Use your creative writing skills to bring life to even the dullest moments, like showering or brushing your teeth.

Write in different styles: try the voice of a TV advert; a surgeon; a bomb disposal expert.

Exercise 7

Single senses



20 minutes



For this creative writing exercise **imagine your character only has one sense.**

Then describe the same scene over again swapping out which sense they have.

For example, your character has only the ability of hearing and nothing else.

Pick a scene to describe and then do it all over again using only sight.

Learning materials

Visual PowerPoint, work on individual and group tasks leading to common products. The programme is flexible enough to allow for the creativity of the trainer to organize the work process.

Methodological explanation

Considering the recurring pandemic situation, the course has been planned as an online learning opportunity, but its content is flexible in terms of delivery. It can be a standalone course or part of another curriculum.

Online based experience and flexibility: this will allow the trainer and learners to learn at their own pace and convenience.

Depending on the art field in which the trainer is involved, as well as the level of preparation of learners and their interests, the trainer decides with what frequency to deliver the 5 modules.

Debriefing questions

- *What do we know now about your own creative writing process?*
- *What challenges did you face?*
- *What were the individual and group tasks?*
- *What is the impact we would like to achieve?*
- *What was valuable and exciting for you today?*
- *What could make your experience even better?*

Feedback

Once the module is complete, ask learners for feedback. Use a brief online form or ask them at the end of the module. Questions to ask: see above.

Description of joint practical assignments

Please see the detailed scenario below.



Guidelines for peer-to-peer learning and evaluation

Peer-to-peer learning is an approach to teaching where learners teach each other. Without direct intervention from the trainer, students engage in collaborative learning.

As a trainer you will monitor the process, but peers are in charge. Working one-on-one within the group tasks and in breakout rooms, peers provide each other individualized help, promote teamwork, and gain new insights from one another.

In the context of the module, peer-to-peer learning is a way for the learners to:

- Learn new skills and tactics from others in the group, through shared experiences
- Support others and be supported in their journey
- Help learners to improve their overall performance – as students or workers. This is in contrast to individualised learning. Most skills can't be learned independently, but require teamwork

Tips and tricks for trainers

Be prepared to share your own and other's experiences of creative writing. Introduce yourself to the concept with videos or the suggested readings presented here.

Focus on learning through teamwork and fun. Young people will have much more solid takeaways if they have good time together and approach the subjects through creativity rather than following a strictly outlined process.

Potential pitfalls

- 1. Playing card debrief:** Participants may find themselves blocking their own creativity with their own internal voices which use terms such as 'You mustn't... you can't.... that's wrong...' Encourage participants to switch off the 'cop in the head' by for example:
 - Permitting them to write privately and not share work if they don't want to;
 - Using joint letter writing exercises
 - Encouraging automatic writing skills
- 2. Process v's product:** The process of generating and editing text – and then sharing it publicly – can be quite daunting for young people who may not have done this before. We advise you to encourage rather than judge young people's work; to encourage participants to share their work rather than instruct them to; and to appreciate that the process the participant is going through may be as valuable (and possibly more valuable) than having to produce a finished product).
- 3. Secretarial writing v's creative writing:** Often participants can get demotivated by thinking they have to write 'properly' i.e., with correct punctuation, grammar and sentence structure. Whilst this can be important, focusing on it too early in the process can be a deterrent to creative writing. Try to reassure participants that it's their creative, written voice we want to focus on here – not whether or not they know where to put commas and full stops.

Potential adaptation for face-to-face learning

This workshop can be easily adapted to offline and online environments as well. The plan originally is written for the online setting, (using resources like Jamboard) and for discussions and breakout rooms, using any call programs (Zoom, Teams etc.)

After the activity part of the workshop, you can have a short break before the debriefing.

Further reading resources

Writers in residence: A practical guide for writers and organizations in London by M. Armitage, 2003
https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/writers_in_residence.pdf

Writers in Schools: a short guide to best practice by Arts Council England, 2006

Writers Working with Schools by M. Coe and J. Sprackland, 2005

Jumpstart Poetry in the Secondary School' Storytelling for Youth Work: A Tool for Connection and Understanding in Changing Times by C. Yates, 2004
<https://storytelling-youth.eu/#/en/outputs>

On the Origin of Stories: Evolution, Cognition, and Fiction by Brian Boyd, 2009

The Storytelling Animal: How Stories Make Us Human by Jonathan Gottschal, 2013

The Storyteller's Secret by Carmine Gallo, 2016

Why Inspiring Stories Make Us React: The Neuroscience of Narrative by Paul J. Zak, 2015

Creative writing: How to unlock your imagination and develop your writing skills by A. Ramet, 2011

Poetry on the Hoof

<https://drnicko.com/category/banging-on-about-the-arts/poetry-on-the-hoof/>

The NOP Werkshop

<https://nickowenpublishing.com/category/the-nop-werkshop/>

Joseph Campbell's Heroic Adventure

<https://www.movieoutline.com/articles/the-hero-journey-mythic-structure-of-joseph-campbell-monomyth.html>