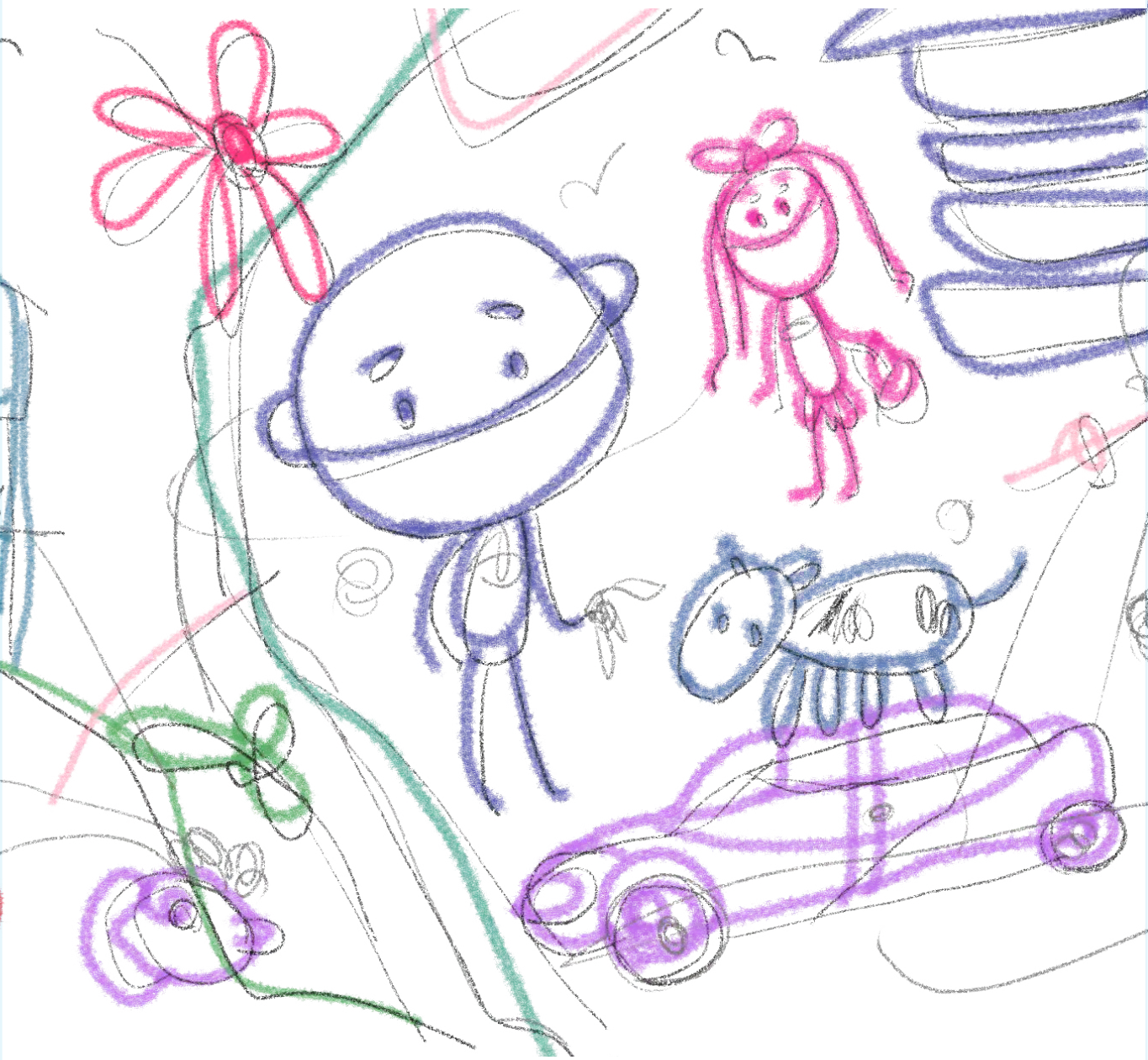
Yi Li Surajit Sarkar Tharaphi Than Jyothi Thrivikraman



OUR STORIES MATTER!

A Place-Based Educator's Toolkit

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How We Arrived Here

Some Personal Stories from Myanmar (2023)

Than Yaw Zin/ Attachment by Pluto

When I was seven, early one morning, a duck cart passed in front of our house. One duckling fell out of the cart. Mom called out to the cart driver, but he could not hear her. Four of us sisters convinced Mom to adopt the duckling. We named her Kauk Ya (Pick Up). We took her everywhere and she followed us everywhere. She even knew her name. Ducks like to swim, but since we lived in a city, there weren't any ponds. We only had a well. We put water in a small tub for her, of which the duck made a mess all the time, which annoyed Mom to no end. We didn't want to get rid of the duck, so we took turns cleaning up once she was done playing in the water, no matter how tired we were. The duck grew up right in our hands, spending all her time with us. We had a strong sense of attachment. One day, she was found dead in front of a neighbour's house. The neighbour recognised her and brought her body back to us, narrating what had happened with Bo Phyu, the dog who had taken her away. We broke down on seeing her body. Dad helped us bury her after we resolutely refused to eat her. I would like to call this story Than Yaw Zin, which means attachment. We had looked after Kauk Ya very well. She was our first pet.

Tete Raal/ Being Mindful by Su

Describing her grandfather, she said that while she didn't grow up with him, she had met him and had learnt from the family that like many others after the Second World War, he had come from the village to the city. He had never been to school, but learnt how to read in order to run his business and made sure that we read Buddhist literature. He managed his life and business in tandem through many challenges, including the time of socialism. He was generous and made all sorts of donations. In the nationwide student

protests of 1988, he cooked and distributed Congee, the bright rice, to the protesters and other people. Until his last breath, he retained his tete raal - a word difficult to translate, but essentially meaning living with a good conscience and being mindful. In his photograph under the altar, he is wearing a Chinese jacket and a Burmese longyi and sitting in a chair.

Visitors remember him and ask about him. Sometimes when new visitors want to find us, they find our house using his name. We talked about him today when a visitor came along.

A Ghostly Laugh by Chris

When I came here two years ago, in 2021, this was the only place where we could get Internet access. Right here, where we were staying then, is where the bodies of our fallen comrades are buried. That day, I was sitting alone outside while the others had gone to bed. I had been thinking about ghosts.

At about 02:00 AM in the morning, I heard a strange laughter. It felt like the voice of a girl. I switched on my phone light and went to see if any of my friends were awake and laughing at something. But I found everyone asleep, so I came back thinking I must have been hallucinating or something. Suddenly, I again heard someone laugh loudly, this time very close to my ears. I instantly dropped my phone and power bank and ran inside to the room in which I used to sleep. That is my story.

Why these Stories? And for Whom?

The personal accounts and testimonies shared by workshop participants from Myanmar, provide a window into worlds harshly dragged away from life-in-the-slow-lane and the wrenching, heartless transformations of lives torn apart by state-led violence and displacement. The stories illuminate an inner and an outer world, between the Way of the Buddha and the feelings of grief and loss, but through them all, a desire to hold on to a sense of belonging and of being human.

Located at the convergence of community lives, socio-political dynamics, human connections and personal interventions, displaced educators from Myanmar are well-placed to provide unique perspectives on pedagogies in precarity. Their accounts, transformed into oral narratives of the kind described above, shared online with us from January to December 2023, form the basis of this Educator's Toolkit. Listening to their life experiences and reflecting upon them has been a compelling encounter for us. As scholars interested in situated[1] or contextualised learning practices, we were impelled to produce this toolkit of processes, through which such experiences can be used more widely for storytelling and building a repertoire of place-based pedagogies for different learning groups, from middle school to university undergraduates, in any socio-political context.

The focus of the Humanities Across Borders programme on pedagogies beyond the classroom, forms the background for this Project, which brought Tharaphi Than, Associate Professor, World Languages and Cultures, Northern Illinois University (NIU), and Surajit Sarkar, Founding Faculty, Centre for Community Knowledge (CCK), Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD) together for the first time in 2017. Working respectively on decolonising Asian Studies[2] and

1 Lave, J. and Wenger, E. 1991. Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation. Cambridge.

2 Than, Tharaphi. 'Why Does Area Studies Need Decolonization?' Critical Asian Studies Commentary Board. 20 November 2021. https://doi.org/10.52698/XPTS4931.

Community-Based Knowledge[3] in Higher Education, Tharaphi and Surajit met with Jyothi Thrivikraman, Assistant Professor, Global Public Health at Leiden University College (LUC), at HAB's Workshop on Craft as Method, held at Saint Louis, Senegal, in November 2022[4]. It was during this week-long interaction with scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds, who teach at diverse universities across the world, that the seed of the idea to develop a place-based educator's toolkit was planted.

After the 2021 coup, many teachers and students who boycotted the military government were unable to go back to their classrooms. It was in this context, when education and educators in Myanmar were forgotten, that we tried to address two questions that have a wider resonance. One, what resources can educators draw upon when there are no textbooks, libraries or formal educational institutions and structures? Two, what should teachers and students do when textbook content does not reflect local realities and is a means of indoctrination by the state propaganda machinery and vested political interests?

We brainstormed on how to pool resources to support teachers in Myanmar, reflected on the issues involved and initiated what became a series of productive online discussions around storytelling pedagogies. Yi Li, Lecturer, East and South East Asian History, Aberystwyth University (AU), whose research comprises migration history and colonialism in Myanmar, joined the conversation shortly after.

While we come from different academic backgrounds, we all share an interest in place-based education and building alternative pedagogies for learners in precarious contexts. The first set of online dialogues involved Surajit, Yi, Tharaphi and Jyothi practising and modifying storytelling and place-based education materials. For example, we experimented with notions of 'paraphrasing' and 'chain stories' to engage with participants' memories and experiences, inspire enthusiasm to imaginatively work with stories. Two teachers from Myanmar - Chris and Su, were invited to several of the sessions to test some of the pedagogical activities we were proposing.

Our discussions culminated in an in-person meeting in June 2023. The Workshop, "Underground Educators of Myanmar and What We can Learn from Them",[5] supported by the HAB programme, took place at the International Institute of Asian Studies, Leiden University, where we had the opportunity to further experiment with mapping techniques in storytelling, along with Hawng Tsai (Ah Sai), Co-Founder, Thinking Classroom Foundation[6], with immense experience in training teachers among displaced communities in Myanmar. Following this, over five weeks between October and November 2023, we organised weekly online sessions with thirty five teachers in Myanmar, supported by AU's interdisciplinary hub for future generations' thinking and research, The Worlds We Want[7].

These online and in-person sessions helped us develop the four-day workshop, Learning with Memory, organised with the support of HAB and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Northern Illinois University, from 28 November to 01 December 2023, at the Regional Center for Social Science

3 Centre for Community Knowledge. 02 December 2024. https://aud.delhi.gov.in/centre-community-knowledge-cck.

4 International Institute for Asian Studies. 02 December 2024. https://www.iias.asia/the-newsletter/article/craft-method.

5 International Institute for Asian Studies. 02 December 2024. https://www.iias.asia/events/underground-educators-myanmar-and-what-we-can-learn-them.

6 Thinking Classroom Foundation. 02 December 2024. http://www.thinkingclassroom.org/.

7 The Worlds we Want. 02 December 2024. https://theworldswewant.net/.

and Sustainable Development, Chiang Mai University, in Northern Thailand[8]. This Handbook emerges from these sustained efforts and is meant for educators interested in integrating place-based education and storytelling into their pedagogy, not only when educational work is disrupted by conflict and other vulnerabilities, long-term or sudden, but also when their mandate of fostering creative and critical thinking is eclipsed or deliberately suppressed. Even though it has been developed with underground educators from Myanmar, this Toolkit is useful to introduce place-based education as a strategy for decolonising syllabi and pedagogies in schools.

The Toolkit is a prompt, a memory aid, for drawing on the living memories of place, time and experience. This intangible resource is relevant for regions where educational materials do not reflect local lives and places and where educators themselves are under threat. Using a collaborative approach to knowledge production and exchange, coupled with an activist's mindset, this Educator's Toolkit aims to address conspicuous gaps in textbook based classroom pedagogies, and identifies as its key constituency, educators seeking to transform lives in times of uncertainty and fear.

The nine prompts presented here evolved over a period of eight months during which we collectively discussed and planned how to share our own explorations of where stories emerge from, how they can be developed into complex narratives and how they can be used to transmit knowledge and engage students using a variety of experiential media. We sought to address the issue of making educational material available and accessible in the languages of the learners. This has been, and remains, an important aspect of decolonising education. This Toolkit is therefore produced in English and Burmese and both editions are open access.

A Reflexive Process

In conclusion, we recount how after our first online session, a participating educator wrote a 12-page story in Burmese, titled Leyate, meaning hand woven clothes. The first few sections are about cotton plants followed by an explanation of the very detailed weaving process with looms based in homes. The Educator comes from a dry zone in Myanmar in which almost every house has hand looms and produces cotton fabric. She was initially sceptical of our storytelling methods as she did not think she could produce stories or inspire her students to tell theirs. The education system most Burmese have been instructed in has been top-down and prescriptive, leaving little room for teachers to use their agency and creativity in their students' learning processes. After the session, however, she wrote her story, convinced that there are stories all around her.

In the words of another educator at the end of an online session, 'For me, it was really helpful to learn how to facilitate and find local stories from everyday life. For example, my place is the fourth most conflicted area in the country right now. Six people have been killed by a landmine just today. I've always thought of including such information in stories so it can become a part of history one day. I now know how to. Today's session was really helpful and it's really great to know how to make stories from the students' own experiences.'

This Toolkit is the result of collective learning. We, as facilitators, learned from each other through all our discussions and from the teachers and others who participated

8 Humanities Across Borders. 02 December 2024. https://humanitiesacrossborders.org/events/learning-memory-community-storytelling-workshop-burmese-underground-educators.

in the online sessions and at the Workshop in Chiang Mai. Working with recollections of lived experiences requires teaching and learning to be considered a collective act. The process of listening, reflecting, writing and reading collectively is very different from teaching as an individual centric activity, based on skill, ability, talent and experience.

There was significant learning from the teachers who participated in the online sessions and those who attended the Workshop in Chiang Mai. They shared their experiences and stories and helped us improve our exercises and clarify our understanding about storytelling. In the Burmese context, stories are often considered mere tales or fictional accounts that nevertheless carry moral lessons. In our workshops, consequently, the processes we employed demonstrated that stories are more than what they appear. Stories and narratives drawn from memory enable us to see peoples' lived worlds, their inner worlds and learn about their interactions with the places they inhabit.

These learnings helped us realise that situated knowledge should be front and centre of our approach to place-based pedagogies. This methodology embeds what is local and familiar in the teaching and learning process by encouraging participants to recollect, engage with and tell their stories and empowers facilitators to use these narratives and stories as the basis of place-based education. Often, people from the 'Third World' or the Global South feel the need to transplant themselves into the Global North or embrace imported knowledge from the West, in order to be considered 'educated', i.e. recognised as having a certificate of legitimacy. With this Toolkit, we want to emphasise that one can be educated from where one is and from what one knows. What we are familiar with is in fact the source of embedded knowledge. Our interactions with our immediate surroundings through the senses are also part of acquiring knowledge. Teachers must know that their places matter, their feelings matter and their ways of knowing the world matter, i.e. their stories matter. It is indeed this knowledge and validation that they pass on to learners.

Collective Storytelling in Education

Since the 2021 military coup, basic and higher education in Myanmar have been significantly disturbed, with both students and teachers unable, or unwilling, to attend the military-run schools. The coup has reinvigorated the decades-long armed resistance against socio-economic marginalisation and cultural-political oppression. Few schools, colleges and universities in government controlled areas are operational, while one-third of the region's population has been displaced, with no access to any formal education. For educators working in fragile areas, education is a tool for rebuilding communities. Classrooms then are spaces where the knowledge of communities and their everyday experiences are brought back as engaging pedagogies.

Education can be liberating, linking students to their pasts and enabling the reimagining of futures (Freire (1970 English Version) 2018). Education can engage students in deliberative decision making, transforming them into involved citizens grounded in local democratic traditions. These themes are central to the ethos of place-based education and critical pedagogy which aim to harness existing local contexts and contingencies for student engagement and learning. This work draws upon three educational debates: place-based education (PBE), decolonisation and critical pedagogy (Freire (1970 English Version) 2018; Poudel et al 2022). Recent pushes to standardise the curriculum have met with resistance as some scholars seek to ground children's learning in local phenomena and lived experiences (Smith 2002; McInerney 2011). Whether it is called PBE, community-oriented schooling (Theobald and Curtiss 2000) or place-conscious education (Gruenewald 2003), efforts aim to ground education in the 'local'. Gruenewald (2003) highlights that current school curricula do not consider place, but rather focus on standardised outcomes and metrics. PBE on the other hand 'aims to enlist teachers and students in the first-hand experience of local life and in the political process of understanding and shaping what happens here' (Gruenewald 2003 p. 620). Examples in literature include students connecting with local communities with a focus on biodiversity, environmental education, service learning and local history tours (Sobol 2004; McInerney 2011). This aligns with Freire's (2018) view that children should not be viewed as empty vessels needing to be filled with knowledge but as active learners.

Stories allow people from varied backgrounds to bridge differences and build understanding. They take the form of meanings and explanations that we store in our memories, helping us remember, make sense of events in the past or the present (McVee and Boyd 2015) and create new possibilities of communication for the future, both individually and collectively. As relational activities involving the listener, the teller and the place, stories and storytelling provide the space to reimagine futures and allow tellers and listeners to contextualise the complexity of a situation through several lenses.

We view stories and storytellers in PBE as 'living resources' that can be brought to co-create context, which could be place-based knowledge, memories, experiences and more. Stories emerge from shared understandings of place, by learners,

teachers and compatriots in a common struggle, and are created in camaraderie and friendship. They grow out of earlier stories that arrange events and details into a loose narrative structure, transformed by each new narrator.

Why and how do we remember stories? How can we develop our own? What kinds of experiences from our lives make for good stories? There are all kinds of stories in our lives that we can adapt into the ones we want to share – they could be about someone important or about a relationship; they could be about events, about normalcy and disruption, about accomplishment, about a place - whether a room at home or a street or a place we love; they could even be about what we do, or overcoming a challenge, such as love or a discovery - anything that lends itself to desire-struggle-realisation or the beginning-middle-end structure that all good stories possess.

While putting together our stories, each one of us was working to create a unique narrative voice of our own. Realising this and making a story as textured and layered as one's own life experiences takes time and practice. The process of moving from an official (academic) voice, which is invariably dispassionate but nevertheless useful to avoid misunderstandings, is not of much use in a story. Crafting a narrative voice through feedback, reading aloud and asking friends, partners or other participants to identify which parts sound true to our voice, is useful practice indeed. Staying away from clichés, finding less common but more accurate words of course takes time, but it is important to stay with the process and to let the ideas and meanings of what we want to really say, sink in. After all, the best stories tell us more about ourselves than about the details of their narrative.

In our Workshop, we discovered that lived experiences provide important insights into how people perceive and comprehend their disrupted lives. The stories that emerged during our numerous online and in-person meetings were about learning, celebrating, healing and remembering the value of life. It is in the telling and listening of these accounts shared in trust that we can say that they will continue to inspire others to honour their own lives and the telling of their stories.

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Further Resources

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Using the Toolkit

This Toolkit enables educators to use the concept of place to develop stories with and by their communities. It aims to provide guidance on how to enable stories of a place to emerge, methods to develop them further and incorporate them into one's pedagogy. The target audience are educators and content creators (journalists, podcasters, etc), interested in working with communities to produce situated knowledge and promote situated learning techniques.

If you plan to conduct a multiple-day workshop, we recommend using the story prompts in the sequence outlined. While doing so, please be aware of the sequence mentioned in *Prompting Storytelling section in this chapter*.

In multilingual settings, certain voices and languages can tend to dominate the discussions. We therefore encourage the use of languages that participants are most comfortable with and not languages spoken only by the facilitators. Ideally, at least one facilitator should be from the participants' community. If not, translation/ interpretation service should be available.

Facilitators

We recommend three to four facilitators for up to 25 participants. They should be familiar with the idea of stories as resources for education and some who have an affinity with the local community where the workshop is to be held.

Participants

Around 20, with no less than 15 and no more than 25 participants. This enables a variety of group sizes to be created for the story prompts.

This workshop is an exercise in collective learning, designed to enlarge the opportunity for all participants to have engaged and responsive interactions. For this reason, care must be taken at every moment in the workshop, that no participant feels overshadowed or inconsequential. However, do recognise that despite every effort, each participant will not engage the same way and there will be several moments of silence. In order to keep the group active, it should be no larger than can be reached audibly by a normally spoken voice. If this condition is not met, people at the margins of hearing will

feel left out.

Participants for the workshop could be gathered through civil society organisations or community centres. This is an activity-based training that relies on individual, group and full class exercises, where team cooperation is essential to the quality of the delivery. Participants may be from diverse backgrounds and may, or may not, know each other from before. Over the course of the four days at our Chiang Mai workshop, we observed that there were increased interactions among participants, beyond the day-time training, through collective activities such as tea and lunch breaks, evening excursions and small group meals, all of which influenced the classroom dynamics.

Finding a Shared Space (Fig 1)

You may have to use a library, school or community hall for this activity. Regardless of the location, we recommend that all participants and facilitators sit facing each other to allow equal opportunity for full group participation, ideally without using any microphones. This is best for face-to-face interaction. When group work needs to be done, groups can decide where they want to be, either in the same shared space as in the full group meetings or somewhere else they are by themselves without distraction. In such cases, it is important to keep a note of time, and join the full group when the allotted group activity is over.

Figure 1: Finding a Shared Space

Workshop Interactions

During the training, power imbalances may occur due to differences in the complexity of participants' varied social standing, previous experience, age, gender, knowledge and skills. Some members may feel uncomfortable speaking out or challenging such imbalances due to prevailing social protocols and specific cultural context, to avoid open conflict and to preserve politeness or 'face' among strangers. It is important that each participant has the opportunity to tell their stories without interruption and also be prepared to listen to comments from others.

Groups should be asked to pick one or two stories after discussion among members, to be presented to the class or to follow up. In general, facilitators should refrain from giving specific instructions on the selection criteria and leave it to the participants to work that out. It is critical for them to experience the group's dynamics first-hand.

Prompting Storytelling

Trying to recollect from memory and experience can be a difficult exercise at any time. When it is hard to know what to speak or write about, prompts can help initiate the process of recollection, especially when trying to remember moments which are painful and grief laden. Through our series of online and in-person workshops, we used a variety of prompts to kickstart the process - easy questions designed to jog memory and recollection, using reminders that can be person, place or object-based. Singly or together, they usually lead to something that can be assembled into a structure for a story.

This Toolkit is structured around nine story prompts to aid the process of recollecting memories and crafting them into a story. These prompts allow adaptation and structuring of stories as they emerge.

Each prompt in the Toolkit starts with an explanation on the rationale behind why we designed it - often based on our previous experience in the field, inspired by our participants and colleagues or developed from our varied disciplinary backgrounds. It is followed by a brief introduction of what the activity is about, why it is important and how it helps to build a story, along with its Milestones/ Learning Points, Duration and Materials Needed. We then provide a detailed Workshop Process for each prompt.

We conclude with Why Stories Matter and Reflections, to debrief the learning process and highlight key points. In TTT Insights, we share our reflections and observations acquired from our Workshops, feedback and follow up discussions from our participants and/ or among ourselves as facilitators and co-learners in the process. Finally, a Further Resources section can be found in most exercises.

One or more stories emerge from activities in a story prompt, either from individual participants or group work. These give participants an idea of how to create and revise their stories, collaborate on group stories, and listen to and comment on others' stories. This process culminates in a Final Project, an independent and individual story, to showcase all the skills acquired from the training.

The Toolkit covers the prompts listed below. We recommend that the users cover all these activities in the specific order listed below. The sequence indicates a process through which storytelling for place-based thinking can be understood, collected, shared and reflected upon.

1. Names Tell Stories - 2.5 hours
2. Mapping Visible and Invisible Surroundings (before No. 4 and No. 8) - 3.5 hours (up to half a day)
3. All Make One Story - 2.5 hours
4. Photovoice - Images Speak (after No. 2 and before No. 8) - 3.5 hours (up to half a day)

5. Interviewing or Listening to Others - 2 hours
6. Paraphrasing: Making Stories Meaningful (after No. 5) - 2.5 hours
7. Biographies of Things (after No. 5 and No. 6) - 3.5 hours (up to half a day)
8. Storyboards: The Language of Storytelling (after No. 2, No. 5 and No. 7) - 3.5 hours (up to half a day)
9. A Place-Based Story - 1 full day

Session durations offered are recommendations and can be adapted based on the specific needs of the group, the setting and other dynamics. A sample schedule from the Chiang Mai Workshop can be found in Appendix II as reference.

Reflection and On the Spot Feedback

Pre- and post-training surveys should be handed out to participants. The pre-training survey enables facilitators to get to know a little about the participants, in terms of general demographics and their expectations from the workshop. The post-training survey provides comprehensive feedback on the workshop. Appendix I lists the survey questions we used, which could be the basis of future surveys.

A robust feedback system during the workshop is encouraged. In our workshop, after every morning and afternoon session, we immediately invited written feedback using sticky notes (Fig 2). Participants could write their thoughts, suggestions and comments about the session just ended in the language of their choice. Blank sticky notes were placed on a table and participants were invited to write down their thoughts and stick the note/s on a wall or board. All notes remained anonymous. This feedback process allowed us as facilitators to make on the spot adaptations to subsequent workshop sessions. Some changes we made were,

- Varying group sizes across different activities.
- Reshuffling the group composition randomly at least once a day, to allow all the participants to spend some time working with each other.

Figure 2: Reading on the Spot Feedback

Facilitators must remember to:

- Respond immediately to the comments and feedback.
- Refer to specific comments and indicate if and how changes can be made. If any modifications are possible, they must be implemented immediately. This gives participants a clear sign that their feedback is important and taken seriously.

In addition to these recommendations, readers of this Toolkit may improvise and think of other ways to integrate some of the less vocal or quiet participants into the workshop.

Materials and Equipment used in the In-Person Workshops

- Poster or chart papers with different coloured markers.
- Notebooks and pens.
- Sticky notes.
- Mobile phones with digital cameras to take photographs.
- A laptop and a projector are recommended to display teaching materials on the big screen in the classroom (see alternatives below).
- A padlet (or other similar interactive and collaborative content sharing online tools that are available as downloadable mobile applications) is recommended to share multimedia files, including photographs. <https://padlet.com>
- Wires to connect mobile phones, the laptop and projector, or among mobile phones.

During the Chiang Mai workshop, teaching was carried out using a mix of paper, whiteboard and markers, as well as laptops and a projector. We recommend that facilitators use paper/ white board for instructions. In case participants have no laptops, they can use their mobile phones with the padlet application to write their stories.

Story Prompt 1

Names Tell Stories

We opened our workshop with a seemingly innocent and non-intrusive exercise - talking about our names. The 'familiar' is a place from which stories can develop.

Names contain stories too – those of families, of us, or both. Each of us has a name, sometimes more than one, and we often know who named us so and why. In Burmese contexts, for instance, the Bamar naming system based on the days of the week is common, in addition to places, animals and weather being popular choices of names.

'What is your name? What is the reason you are called what you are called? How did you get your name?' The objective of this prompt, Names Tell Stories, was to introduce the key component of stories, how they are present everywhere, even in the mundane, and to help participants become comfortable with each other through an ice-breaking activity. The concept of name was chosen deliberately, since it applied to participants regardless of their varied backgrounds.

As facilitators, we were conscious that not everyone might be able to talk freely, especially because some of the participants came from intensely conflict-ridden regions and highly surveilled cities.

Please note here that the 'name' referred to here could be the participant's real name, a pseudonym, alias or any other preferred name they would like to be known by during the workshop. The point is not the name per se, but the story behind the preferred name. If there are multiple language versions of the preferred name, that dimension could be explored too.

Milestones/ Learning Points

A Story Arc is the journey of the story, with:

- A beginning, middle and end;
- A build-up and its climax.

. Key elements of the story: characters, places and things.
. Title of the story.

Duration

(2.5 hours) Since this is the first prompt and participants may need some time to adjust to the learning environment, a slow pace is recommended, in addition to adequate amount of time for the facilitators and participants.

Materials Needed

Paper, pens, markers, white board.

Workshop Process

Part I - The Story of Your Name

Group Size: Full Class

Duration: 30 minutes

Introduction: Facilitators introduce themselves, their names and share one-minute stories of the names.

Question to the Class: Think of the name by which you want others to call you during this training and tell everyone the story behind that name. What does it mean? Why was it given to/ taken by you? Anything particular that you would like us to know?

Each participant takes turns to tell the name story in no more than one minute (Fig 3).

Part II- Refine Your Name Story

Group Size : 4 to 6 Participants

Duration: 30 minutes

Each group works together to select one story from among its members' name stories. The chosen story is elaborated upon with details, to make it into a three-minute story, and given a title.

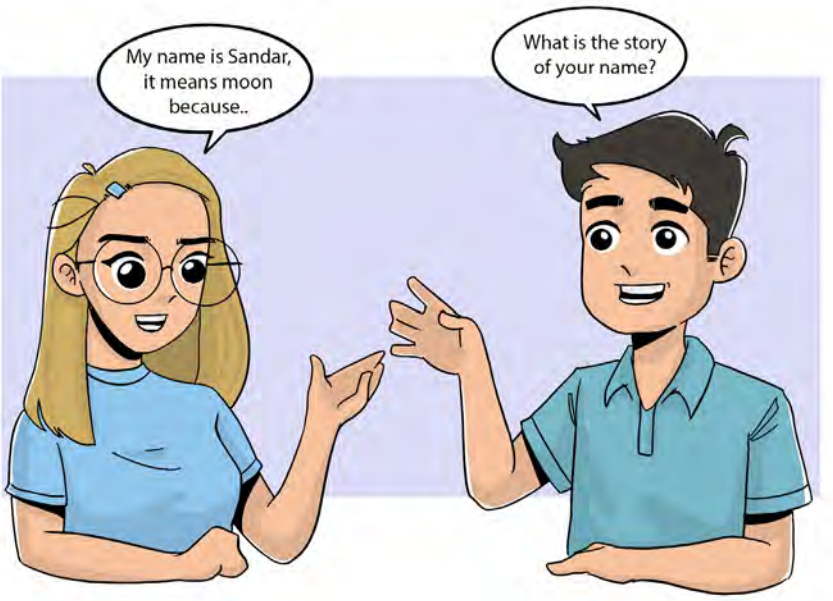

Figure 3: The Story of Your Name

Part III - Name Story Presentation

Group Size: 4 to 6 Participants

Duration: 45 minutes

Each group presents its three-minute story to the class.

Facilitators must write down the titles and brief narratives of the stories on the white board and highlight their story arcs.

They could use charts to summarise the arc - the beginning, middle and end; build-up and climax, locate the story in place and time and allow emotions expressed by the class to change its narrative.

Example: The Story of Your Name

Star from Light Years Away, in a One-Star Universe.

There is a star named SEL, very far away. She is lonely and believes she might be the only star in the universe. She imagines a larger star family somewhere. One day, she really wants to shine for people, but can't shine very strongly as a lone star. Twinkle Twinkle Little Little Star. She wants to shine with others, to join in with them. Unfortunately, one of the bright stars knows her plan. He wants to be the only one shining and plots to use black magic to block her light. But SEL dreams of being the brightest star in a world of darkness and joins the group to work together with it. At night, SEL shines with the other stars to give light to the people. (Fig 4) That way, she achieves her goal of being the brightest star in the sky.

Figure 4: The Story of Your Name

Why Stories Matter

Group Size: Full Class
Duration: 45 minutes

Facilitators could review the purposes of this prompt: why we do this (refer to the Introduction) and what we can learn from it.

Usually, we recommend explaining the 'why' before each prompt, so as to give participants a clear signpost. However, since this is the warm up prompt, we reversed the order. This encourages classroom dynamics early on, allows participants to experience the teaching and learning style and the types of activities they can expect from the rest of the training.

In the following prompts, it is critical that a clear explanation of milestones/ learning points (the why and what questions) expected, be discussed first:

- Why stories matter, types of stories and the purpose of stories.
- The power of stories: a mutually heightened experience of telling stories out loud and hearing them and the connection between written words and sounds.
- The elements of stories: people, places and things.
- Structure (the twists of the arc) in chronology: linear, flashback and spirals/ circles. (Don't think of stories as straight lines.)
- Further twists: emotions arise in their telling, changing the emotional content of the stories.
- There can be multiple possibilities for the title of a story. Which is the best one? The one that will always make sense to the storytellers and their audience and suit the context.

Reflections

In different cultural contexts, the English word 'story' might have multiple implications, involve several translated words and contain ambiguous meanings. To avoid getting lost in translation, facilitators must address any potential disagreements on what a story is, in the participants' lingual and cultural contexts. At our workshop, we emphasised that story is not only drama, but also life events.

- After the group stories are told and commented upon, facilitators will have a fair idea of the story writing and telling abilities of the participants.
- There could be other questions or elements that arise, for example, a chain story, to which we will come back later.

TTT Insights

We gave a chance, rather encouraged, participants to recognise that all stories have an internal logic, which connect different elements - people, places and events. This is achieved by thinking about the arc of a story, i.e. its pathway from the beginning and middle, up to its ending. A story arc is the general trajectory of a story as a whole. While you might dig into the details when sketching an outline for your story, the story arc looks at everything from a distance and takes the reader along from a certain point at the beginning to its completion.

Names vary a lot depending on place, ethnicity and religion. During our workshop, some participants took the opportunity to use their names to narrate stories as well as to educate others. After the session, participants became aware of the diverse composition of the group and, through the workshop thereafter, we witnessed different ways in which the participants tried to include each other in the activities.

A note on language

In Burmese language, story ponpyin means a 'drama', often with a moral story, and therefore if the training is conducted in Burmese, the facilitator should orient the participants to alternative words, such as zat lan, zan kyaung, etc., so that they can grasp the broader meaning of story to include personal lives and events and not just moral tales.

Further Resources

On Digital Storytelling

Digital Storytelling at the University of Brighton. https://blogs.brighton.ac.uk/digitalstorytelling/.

Lambert, Joe. 2003. Digital Storytelling Cookbook. Digital Diner Press. https://paws.wcu.edu/ncluke/digital_literacy/docs/Lambert_DScookbook_2003.pdf

On Story Arcs

Kidder, H. L. Story Arcs: 5 Key Elements, Examples & How to Write Them Well. https://self-publishingschool.com/story-arcs/.

Joe Bunting, The Write Practice, 'How to Shape a Story: The 6 Types of Story Arcs for Powerful Narratives'. https://thewritepractice.com/story-arcs/.

Story Prompt 2

Mapping Visible and Invisible Surroundings

Maps represent the spaces around us: homes, offices, parks, streets, etc. (tangible maps). Maps can also tell us about the worlds we cannot see, by drawing attention to the obscure qualities of people (for example, languages they speak), places and things in the real world (intangible maps). They enable us to visualise our physical surroundings as well as the invisible parts of our environments.

A map can tell us about how the past is preserved in the present in different ways, hidden from plain sight by those who have the power to make them. Most often we use maps created by others, but there is power in creating our own. In our workshops, maps become gateways to participants telling stories about their environments and encounters with other people, fauna and flora and built structures in private and public spaces.

Most of us are familiar with the physical and historical landmarks of where we live. The mapping prompt enables participants to tell stories about the places that are significant to them. Participants can create different maps of the same place, depending on what is relevant to them. Maps, like stories, are not static. Over time, they can expand and change as participants explore new areas and themes, engage in different conversations and experience new situations. These add more layers to their stories.

Maps such as Google Maps do not change frequently. However, those drawn by our participants, often mentally, such as maps from home to the market, change frequently, depending on the security situation. With the map exercise, we wanted to highlight an important yet invisible variable that changes the composition of maps, i.e. time. As with every prompt, we wanted to emphasise that each participant has a different need for maps

and universal maps like Google Maps do not necessarily meet the everyday needs of people. They may not feature landmarks and places important to community members. The prompt reinforces the idea of situated knowledge and knowing with a focus on that which is around us.

Milestones/ Learning Points

- Identify elements in the surroundings that are to be included in the map.
- Visualise the view of the surroundings (and elements) into layers of information.
- Use spatial language in describing the location, and the correlation between elements on the map and locations in the surroundings.
- Understanding mapping as a guide to intangible, cultural knowledge and learning how to mark it.
- Learning how to tell visible and invisible stories about the places around us.

Duration

3 hours (up to half a day)

Materials Needed

- A4 paper, coloured markers, white board.
- Mobile phones to take photographs, an online tool to share photographs, a laptop and a projector to project photographs.

Workshop Process

Part 1 – Tangible Maps

Group Size: 4 to 6 Participants
Total Duration: 45-55 minutes

Warm Up with a map 'From Your Home to the Market'

Duration: 10 minutes

Each person draws the map of how they get from their home to the market. The map could show:

- Objects, buildings and places along the way.
- The route.
- Things at the market.

2. Sharing

Duration: 15 minutes

In groups of 4 to 6 participants, each individual briefly shares their map (two minutes per person).

Each group must make a list of the top three points they found interesting in the mapping exercise.

3. Facilitator Led Session

Duration: 20-30 minutes

The facilitator enquires about the process of mapping and what the participants learned from their own and others' maps. Each group should be asked to share their top three points from the mapping exercise.

Annotating Maps with Stories

Some questions to ask include:

- What have you included in your map? What have you left out? Why?
- How can senses (such as smell and sound) be made visible on a map?
- What did you find interesting in other people's maps?
- What did you like and dislike about the mapping activity?

Part II – Outdoor Exercise

Group Size: 3 to 4 Participants
Duration: 90 minutes

1. *Mapping*

Duration: 30 minutes

The facilitators must instruct participants to take a walk around the training venue, in small groups of 3 to 4. Each group should be given a theme for their walk/ mapping activity. Note that the themes must be developed prior to the training, after reviewing the area. In our workshop, the themes we used were animals along the route, human construction and signage - big and small. During the walk, each group must draft a map of their walk, taking note of sights, sounds, smells and where people and things gather, and take photographs to highlight what they see.

2. *Drawing*

Duration: 15 minutes

Once back, each group should finalise its map (Fig 5) with three to five points highlighted, using photographs that detail points along their journey to make a story.

3. *Sharing Maps and Photographs*

Duration: 45 minutes

Each group takes five minutes to share its map and related photographs with the class. They must highlight how the photographs draw attention to the objective of their maps (To know more about taking photographs for storytelling, see Photovoice - Images Speak [Prompt 4]). Facilitators and participants provide feedback to improve the maps and the photographs (Fig 6).

This activity can end at this stage. Should time allow, groups can improve their maps and photographs can be retaken. The facilitators must provide final feedback on the revised material.

Figure 5: Group Work after the Outdoor Exercise

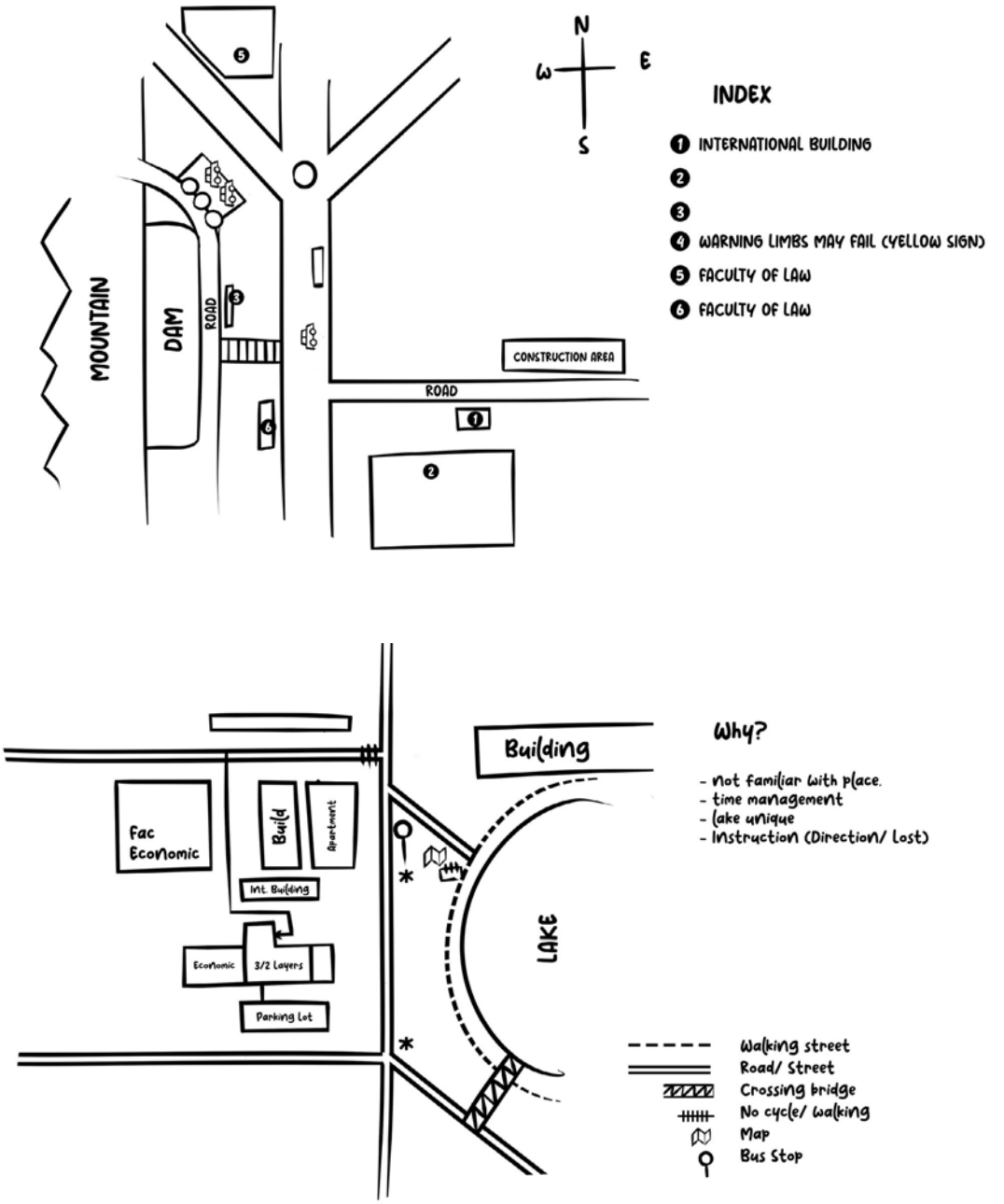

Figure 6: Examples of Tangible Maps

Part II - Intangible Maps

Group Size: Full Class

Total Duration: 35 minutes

1. Intangible Map Demonstration

Duration: 20 minutes

We next explore how maps can bring out the invisible elements of people, places and things.

The facilitators draw a rectangle to represent a table, with dots for each participant. They ask the class to list the languages each participant speaks in order of preference. They should go around the room and record the responses of the participants (Fig 7).

This is an intangible map. The information in the map should be used to count and identify the major and minor languages around the table.

The facilitators could formulate thoughts about how this information can be used: for example, to make sure everyone is heard, to highlight diversity and tailor learning to ensure inclusivity. Other information that can be captured from the same exercise could include: hometowns, gender, what is in the lunch box, etc.

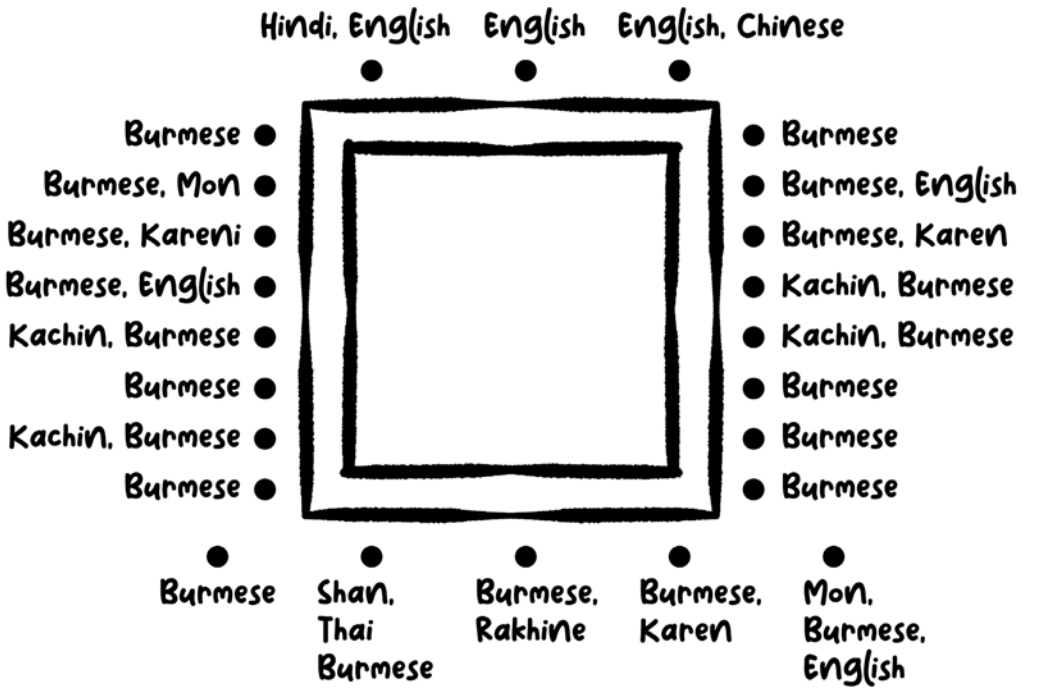

Figure 7: Languages Mapped around the Workshop Table

2. *Practice Intangible Maps*

Duration: 10 minutes

The class should be split into half and each group asked to map an intangible topic. Examples could be favourite author, TV show or song. At the end, the facilitators can point out how they just created an intangible map of popular culture in the room.

3. *Sharing*

Duration: 5 minutes

Each group shares their intangible map.

Reflections

- The facilitators should remember to highlight the connections, similarities and differences that were made visible with the mapping exercise. This places the individual within the group and highlights the dominant intangible and invisible.
- Tangible maps also contain intangible elements. As mapmakers, we need to decide which intangible elements we want to bring out.
- Intangible maps are also useful for teachers and students to get to know the groups. Having this activity early in a training is advisable.
- This activity can be conducted with or without photographs.
- The links between stories and places, as referenced to in the introduction, should highlighted.

TTT Insights

Through this exercise, we realised that participants could see how individual people know and describe the same place differently, and how peoples' register and mental maps of a place are very different from standard maps. For example, in the maps from their home to the market, some participants added tea shops where they learned important news about their neighbourhood. Some others added locations of where major food items were available in the market.

The mapping of visible and invisible surroundings allowed participants to learn about different associations and interactions people have with the same place. For instance, participants added trees and cobbled paths that they use as signs or posts to direct people from one place to another. This Story Prompt reinforced the idea that our relationships with place matters, and there are different ways to know and describe one's place.

Another important learning was that invisible, intangible cultural knowledge can also be mapped, which allows us to look beyond the surface of any place and learn of other kinds of connections (or disconnections).

Further Resources

Palis, Joseph. 2022. 'Geonarratives and Countermapped Storytelling'. In The Routledge Handbook of Global Development, edited by Sims, K., Banks, N., Engel, S., Hodge, P., Makuwira, J., Nakamura, N., and Yeophantong, P. Routledge.

Story Prompt 3

All Make One Story

When we were conducting online sessions with the teachers from Myanmar, many of them were confused with the term 'story'. The Burmese word for story is ***ponpyin***, which many understand as a tale with a moral lesson. Storytelling is then about teaching people moral lessons. We spent some time demystifying storytelling and convincing teachers that familiar objects and topics could become stories and that everyone can tell a story.

To emphasise this point, we asked them to make a chain story. Besides motivating teachers to experiment with different types of stories, including absurd ones, chain storytelling is a good prompt to encourage the young and old to use their imagination, listen to each other and work as a team. Chain storytelling redresses power differentials in a group – between teacher and students, those who have more learning opportunities and hence acquire more skills and those who mostly listen, and those with social privileges and those marginalised, because everyone has a place in the story.

In a chain story, the first sentence is a response to a prompt by the facilitators, either in words, or through a photograph or picture. Participants sitting around the table continue the story one after the other. Each participant picks up from the previous contribution and adds their sentence, following the story arc (Fig 8). This continues until everyone makes a contribution to collectively and coherently form a story, ensuring that the last person provides an end to the story.

Figure 8: The Story Arc

The unpredictable narrative of a chain story, as each person adds a sentence, makes each participant think about **the arc of the story**. The process empowers participants to create a story with and for other participants. The originality of the contribution is in the linking of a participative pedagogy with narrative world making. Younger students, in particular, tend to enjoy reading the stories they make.

Chain storytelling is a good exercise for group bonding since the story belongs to no one individual but the entire group. It is everyone's story. This prompt ensures inclusivity by recognising everyone's contribution and reflecting their shared excitement and creativity.

Milestones/ Learning Points

- Developing the characters of the story.
- Active listening.
- Collaborative story making to shape the story arc.

Duration

2.5 hours

Materials Needed

Paper, pens, coloured markers, white board or flip chart.

Workshop Process

Chain Story – Listen, Tell, Complete

Group Size: Full Class

Total Duration: 80 minutes

1. Demonstration

Duration: 20 minutes

The facilitators must demonstrate the process of creating a chain story to the whole class. They could start with this prompt: My favourite breakfast is....

Person #1 - ...porridge, but they do not serve it here.

Person #2 - ...instead I had bread.

Person #3 - ...I heard that bread has no fibre.

Person #4 - ...no fibre will cause a heart attack.

Person #5 - ...my neighbour, the salesperson, had a heart attack.

Person #6 - ...I heard he ate burgers and drank beer.

The facilitators could highlight the following key points:

- A story must reveal a situation - a set of problems, and the steps (actions) taken to make sense of it, or solve it, and its aftermath.
- The sentences must be simple, straightforward and coherent.
- Participants must listen to what was narrated before them to build on and connect.
- All stories have two parts: the teller's end and the listeners'.
- Being conscious of the arc of the story: the beginning - bread is bad...; the middle – salesperson has a heart attack; and the end - ...burgers and beer are the worst.
- Participants should be encouraged to think about developing their characters so they are convincing.
- Contributions to the story can be from their life or from imagination, though the final collective story will be a work of fiction.

The facilitators must provide prompts to help participants find the links between the story sentences.

2. Full Class Exercise

Duration: 30 minutes

Each person must contribute one sentence, starting with the following prompt: My favourite movie is...

3. Group Work

Group Size: Minimum of 7 Participants per Group

Duration: 30 minutes

Work begins with one person in each group writing one sentence on a sheet of paper in the language they are comfortable with and then passing it to the next person who adds their sentence to the same sheet. This pattern is repeated until everyone in the group has contributed and each group closes with a complete story on the paper.

Group Exercise 1

Prompt: Today, a student borrowed money from their classmates for gambling...

The whole class must get together and reflect on the chain stories generated.

Group Exercise 2

Prompt: My grandmother's sister was a good cook...

Hint: What is the key word here? It is a story about the past.

The whole class must get together and reflect on the chain stories generated.

Reflections

Elements of a Story

- Arc of the story — beginning, middle and end.
- Character development – are they convincing?
- Importance of listening – in order to add to the previous contribution, participants have to listen and collaborate.
- Details in the story – the more details there are, the more the story becomes believable.

How can this be used?

- To teach vocabulary.
- To bring the group together.

TTT Insights

The chain storytelling exercise reorients participants away from stories as moral lessons.

Participants come to understand that stories can be fiction, non-fiction or a combination of both. They connect with each other through their views and thoughts. With practice, chain stories become more coherent and participants learn more about developing the story arc.

Chain stories by children tend to carry a sense of immediacy and details that adults often miss. Children let adults see things that they did not expect to see. In a way, they help adults to explore.

Another unexpected outcome of chain storytelling is that it blurs the boundaries between what is important and what is not. There is a burden of getting things 'right' under an education system that enforces discipline. Chain stories free the participants to find their own voices and continue the story.

Further Resources

Galuh Nur Rohmah, A'i Mulyani Az Zahra, Asmawati Muhamad. 2022. 'Students' Experiences on Chain Story Telling'. Proceedings of the 4th Annual International Conference on Language, Literature and Media. Atlantis Press. Students_Experiences_on_Chain_Story_Telling.pdf

Story Prompt 4

Photovoice – Images Speak

Immediately after the devastating 2008 Nargis cyclone, Tharaphi Than and friends arrived at a coastal village in the delta region of Burma. We distributed used film cameras to children, asking them to take photographs to tell the story of the cyclone. When we developed the photographs, we were taken aback by their visual stories. While the media emphasised the destruction, the death toll and the setback that the cyclone had caused, the children focussed on new possibilities and community resilience. They captured things like the space they cleared to play and a standing monastery amidst fallen palm trees. Children and women dominated their photographs.

While texts and written books have limited reach across communities, visual images provoke people's curiosity and motivate them to tell their stories visually. This is relevant because Burmese society continues to rely on orality to transmit knowledge.

To use a single photograph or a collection of connected photographs is about more than just technical skills. You may be looking at a person or a thing, but may not be seeing them the way they do themselves. So a question to yourself before clicking a photograph is: what do I have to say about the subject I am photographing?

- Why is it interesting to me?
- Who are the people involved?
- Where do I see it happening?
- What part of the story am I showing?

Milestones/ Learning Points

- What do you want to say about the subject of the photographs?
- Drawing attention - framing and context.
- Incorporating photographs into your stories.

Duration

3.5 hours (up to half a day)

Materials Needed

- A4 paper, coloured markers, white board.
- Mobile phones to click photographs, an online tool to share them, a laptop and a projector to project the photographs.

Workshop Process

Part I – Framing the 'Photograph'

Duration: 30 minutes

The more you can connect with your subject, the more illustrative your photographs will be. It doesn't matter whether your subject is a person, place or object.

Instead of pointing the camera at the subject, you need to compose the photo. Framing or composing the photograph will help you draw attention to the subject in the photograph and let others see your interest in it.

The following points can help in framing:

- Size: the size of your subject has a direct relationship to the importance of that subject.
- Relationships: when we see more than one character in a shot, we are meant to acknowledge their relationship (romantic, contentious, etc.)
- Balance: a balanced frame includes elements on the left and right sides of the frame.
- Light: the subject should be well lit, so that details are visible. Move around the subject to see which position allows the best light.

There are many ways to frame your subject, from seeing their entire body to only their eyes. Generally speaking, these are broken down into three main shot sizes: long, medium and close up.

There are different kinds of shots. For example, if people are part of your story, a photograph that shows the person in their environment allows the scene to come together to tell more of the story than if you just click a close up of the person. Here are some photographs from a clam fishing village, demonstrating the different kinds of shots.

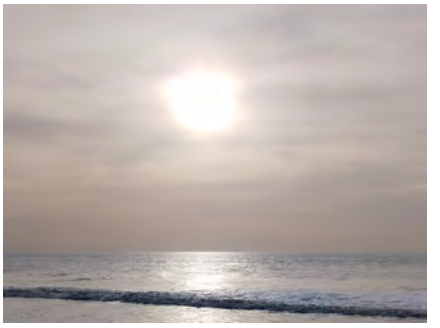

Photo 4.A

Extreme Wide Shot (aka Extreme Long Shot)

Photo 4.A shows the subject from a distance and includes the area around it. This type of shot is particularly useful for establishing time and place, as well as a character's physical or emotional relationship with it. The character doesn't necessarily have to be present in the shot.

Photo 4.B

Wide Shot (aka Long Shot)

Photo 4.B is a camera shot that balances both the subject and the

surrounding imagery. A wide shot will often keep the entire subject in the frame while giving context to the environment.

Photo 4.C

Medium Shot (MS)

Photo 4.C shot depicts body language of the subject and substantial amount of their setting. It can frame multiple subjects as well as the background and space in general.

Photo 4.D

Close Up Shot (CU)

Photo 4.D is a close up shot that fills the frame with a part of the subject. If the subject is a person, then it is often their face.

Photo 4.E

Extreme Close Up (ECU)

Photo 4.E is a type of camera shot size in film that fills the frame with the subject and is so close that one can pick up tiny details that would otherwise be difficult to see.

1. Going Closer - A Photo Series

Group Size: Participants in Pairs

Duration: 45 minutes

Each pair should create a similar series of photographs that begins with a landscape and ultimately zooms into a small detail, at each point revealing a little more of the story, the interactions between the elements and an unexpected revelation about the subject or the setting, like the dragonfly in the ECU above.

Several pairs should be selected by the facilitators to show their photographs to the whole class, along with the story that they create. Other participants can provide feedback, describing how successfully each series of photographs tells a story that is gradually revealed.

Part II - Creating Depth

Duration: 15 minutes

A photograph is a two-dimensional version of the three-dimensional reality we

see. This flattening of space is the reason why foreground and background elements can become distracting in a photograph. Therefore, it is essential to work them out, so they enhance your composition and serve our final image.

An image can be divided into three sections: the foreground, the middle ground and the background.

The middle ground is often, but not always, the subject of the image. The accompanying photograph of an ice cream (Photo 4.F) shows how even in a close up, working with the foreground in focus and background elements out of focus, adds visual appeal.

Photo 4.F

Foreground elements give the viewer a better perception of space in the image. They can be a point of interest that pulls the viewer to the image.

The farthest element is the background, which provides the backdrop to the photograph. By giving the audience context, it makes the subject a visible part of the story with details. The foreground in a photograph provides perspective, context, adds depth to a flat physical image and can create a unique composition.

In Photo 4.G, our eyes are drawn to the bespectacled monk on the right. The left portion of the frame is used to fill out the background creating depth and providing the context of a wat in Chiang Mai.

Photo 4.G

Arranging the framing of the foreground to the background often makes a difference to what people see and remember, besides providing a context for the photograph. In Photo 4.H, the out of focus bark of a tree in the foreground that fills the frame creates depth and provides a unique composition to the face in the background.

Photo 4.H

Part III - Experimenting with Distance

Group Size: Participants in Pairs
Duration: 30 minutes

Participants are asked to choose a subject and photograph it from far away. Then they should move closer and take another photograph. The change in depth of

field is prominent. The closer they are to the subject, the shallower the depth of field.

This exercise is best suited for a camera with a zoom lens. From the same distance, the subject should be photographed first with a wide angle (short focal length) and then with a telephoto lens (long focal length). It will be evident that the telephoto lens provides a shallower depth of field.

Coming back to the whole group, the facilitators should pick some pairs and show their photographs to the class, to demonstrate how different people show depth in photograph composition in a variety of ways.

Part IV - Camera Angles: The Power of Perspective

Duration: 30 minutes

Camera angles provide an easy framing and composing technique, achieved by moving the camera in different directions. Participants must try different angles to see what impact they have on the resulting photograph.

The angle is how the camera is oriented. The camera could be oriented straight and at eye level, tilted downward or tilted upward. Position and angle both have a dramatic impact on the final result of the photograph. Just by changing the point of view, an image can be completely transformed. You can play with size, proportion, depth and many other characteristics.

One of the most important aspects, however, is that you are showing the subject from a point of view that is out of the ordinary.

Eye Level Shot

The eye level or face-to-face shot is taken at the subject's eye level. This also means moving the camera to match the subject as in Photo 4.J. For example, when taking a portrait, you need to get down to their level. It's the same for a subject taller than you, in which case you need to lift your camera over your head in order to be centred to their eyes. This is when you look through the viewfinder of the camera to take a direct photograph.

Photo 4.J

To take an eye-level picture of a person, use your subject's eyes as the guide. Centre the frame to their eyes. Look at your subject head-on and click the photo without the need to tilt the camera in any direction. Get as close to eye level as you can. You may need to kneel, or even lay down, to get the best effect as in Photo 4.K .

Photo 4.K

This angle of view is one of the best ways to capture a subject's emotions - sad, happy, angry, etc. It works best with children as it helps the viewer access the world of the subject in Photo 4.L. It is also a wonderful way to minimise the barrier between the viewer and the story, while the neutral camera angle humanises characters and, most of all, simulates human vision and familiar composition.

Photo 4.L

Top Down Shot

A top down shot or high angle photograph is when you're looking down, tilting the camera downwards to look at your subject like Photo 4.M. This is also known as a bird's-eye view. It captures all your subjects and gives a very descriptive image, clearly capturing the target as you see it. With this type of shot, the ground is normally the background for the picture.

Photo 4.M

The high angle is a great way to fit a scene in a frame. If you need to slim someone down or make them appear shorter than they are, you need a high angle. Taking a picture of your subject from a high angle with a large and expansive background makes them smaller and less intimidating (Photo 4.N).

Photo 4.N

To maximise this effect, try shooting from farther away as in Photo 4.O . A platform or elevation would allow an even higher angle. Make sure that all the pieces of the background you want in the frame are visible.

Photo 4.O

Flatlay

Flatlay is a very popular term on blogs and social media, especially Instagram. Photo 4.P shows a composition of objects laid onto a flat surface. Since there is almost no depth in the top down perspective, photographers get creative using composition, colours and shapes.

Photo 4.P (Courtesy : Tharaphi Than)

Low Angle Shot

A low angle has the opposite effect of a high angle. Shooting something large from a low angle, such as the building in Photo 4.R, creates a real sense of depth.

Photo 4.R

It makes the subject look huge, the dominant thing in the picture as in Photo 4.S. If your subject wants to be seen as the centre of the universe, the low angle is the way to go.

Photo 4.S

There are countless options for taking low angle photographs. The sky is often the background, making composition easy, though anything can be used as a background, from a building to a mountain, a tree or a reflective surface as in Photo 4.T.

Photo 4. T

The one thing to keep in mind is that low angle portraits aren't always appealing.

Part V - Experimenting with Camera Angles

Group Size: Participants in Pairs
Duration: 30 minutes

Participants assess how the three different angles - eye level, top down and low angle, change the perspective of the photograph.

Each participant has to take different shots of their partner, or the things beside them, from the three primary angles. They should be encouraged to try other angles as well. They must click a few with their partner and objects in the frame.

Each team must review the photographs taken and make their selections, considering the reasons behind that selection. Facilitators must then pick any three pairs to present their photographs and

their descriptions to the whole class. This should be followed by a question and answer session with all the participants, discussing the photographs taken and their pros and cons.

Optional Group Exercise for Photography

The facilitators must form the same groups as in the Tangible Mapping exercise the previous day.

The Mapping Exercise should be revised based on comments received in that session and the photography skills discussed in this session.

- If needed, the photographs can be taken again or cropped as needed.
- The maps can also be redrawn or edited.
- The changes made, why they were made and how they enhance the story should be shared by all the groups with all the participants.

Why Images Matter...Capture the Moment!

There are no hard and fast rules for taking great photographs, but professional photographers have some general advice for those who are new to working with the camera.

- Establish a connection with your subject. Make them feel comfortable to yield a more candid shot.
- Understand the light in the environment and use it in the scene to bring out detail.
- Capitalise on colours. Look for chromatic contrast and metaphors in colours.
- Stabilise the camera with a tripod, to avoid framing mistakes and blurring of the photographs.
- Find a clean background. A busy background can distract from the subject.
- Play with camera angles and perspectives. Try to be imaginative and look beyond standard stock photography image styles.
- When shooting outdoors, try to photograph at the golden hour (shortly after sunrise or before sunset), when a low sun angle often creates warm, diffuse light and interesting shades.
- Remember the rule of thirds. Split your frame into thirds, and fill some - but not all, of them with your subject.
- Keep the subject's eyes in focus. It is often the best way to bring a viewer close to the subject.
- Shoot, check, re-compose and re-shoot. Take many photographs using different angles and ideas to catch the best one.

Reflections

- What is being photographed? An object, some close detail about it, or showing it in its context (surroundings)? Each will add new elements to the story that the storyteller must be aware of.
- How much of the setting or subject is displayed within a given frame of a photo, communicates different narrative values.
- Still photography is about capturing a specific moment: it's the point at which subject matter, composition and action intersect.

- A unique angle should be captured, using composition and lighting to create a focal point of the shot to surprise viewers with something new.
- Reflection, lighting and contrast between the subject and the background in the composition must be used to help the subject to pop out of the frame, drawing the eye to it.

TTT Insights

Other than connecting words with pictures, telling stories through images is an inclusive method that enables storytellers who are not comfortable or skilled at using words to express themselves, and for visual learners to understand things and connect with others more simply through images.

When things are difficult to explain in words, images can do the job. Many scholars now use photovoice as a participatory method to bring out and amplify the voices of those who do not usually get to speak.

Further Resources

Camera Work

Shot Types. Media College. www.mediacollege.com/video/shots/.

Photograph Composition

Photography Tips and Tutorials. Digital Photography School. https://digital-photography-school.com/.

Framing in Photographic Composition. B&H Explora. https://www.bhphotovideo.com/explora/photography/tips-and-solutions/framing-in-photographic-composition

Effective Use of Foreground and Background in Photographic Composition. B&H Explora. https://www.bhphotovideo.com/explora/photography/tips-and-solutions/effective-use-of-foreground-and-background-in-photographic.

Photowalking

Learn Photography. LefCourt Photography. https://www.iphotowalks.com/learn-photography/.

Photovoice

Statement of Ethical Practice.

https://photovoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/PV232-01-Statement-of-Ethical-Practice.pdf

Story Prompt 5

Interviewing or Listening to Others

An interview is a conversation between two or more people. It is used to gather specific types of information and to understand the experiences of others. Through interviews we can hear other people's stories, across a variety of topics. Interviewing can capture the details of an event or the emotions behind it. It can bring out humour and richness of detail. Many of us ask questions in our daily lives, but in an interview, we are also listening and probing to get more details.

Every interview strives to obtain fresh information to be used in reconstructing the past and the interviewer conducts one or more question and answer sessions with a willing, knowledgeable interviewee/ narrator. While the interviewee speaks informally about their experiences, the interviewer gently directs the session, by posing questions to stimulate and aid the retrieval of information present in their memory. With patience, warm rapport and a bit of good fortune, insightful accounts can be added to infuse the past with new life - from the memories and mouths of living sources of history. What follows is a discussion on interviewing as a method of unlocking the past.

Interviewing is part of a collective storytelling process, shifting from individuals telling their own stories to allowing others to tell their stories. In hierarchical societies, interviews reflect visible power differences arising from different factors such as age, social position, professional status, gender and religion.

In order to minimise any power difference while collecting people's narratives for story-building, we need to frame interviews as co-creating naratives for storytelling. Letting children interview adults to find out more about things they see in the neighbourhood or learn about festivals and events specific to the place is a good way to

redress some power differences and, more importantly, to understand how children think and what are the questions important to them.

This story prompt is about the process of interviewing and not the stories obtained from them. See Biographies of Objects (Story Prompt 7) for developing stories from interviews.

Building trust is an important initial step before formal interviewing. So build a relationship with the person you want to know more about, ask them if you can use their information and tell them for what purposes.

It is important to know

- Who you want to ask the questions to.
- Why this person should tell you their stories.
- What you want to ask them.
- What are the challenges you may encounter.

Developing Interview Questions

In terms of formulating interview questions, you could have a list of questions to start with, with enough room to expand and ask additional questions. It is good to start with easy questions such as name and where a person was born. You could also ask open questions that prompt them to describe and narrate their memories. Follow up questions could include asking them more, such as who, what and where. If the interviewee responds with just a yes or no, then how, why, when, where and who questions can be asked.

- Avoid closed-ended questions that can end in a yes or no or a single fact - Were you there? What was the date that day? Did you like that?
- Do not ask leading questions - Was it this or that? or I thought that the most important thing was...?
- Ask one question at a time. Ask simple questions.
- Allow the interviewee to do the talking.
- Gather their story (not someone else's or yours).

Milestones/ Learning Points

- Clarity of purpose - why the interview, making a topic list, not a questionnaire.
- Learning to listen and observe.
- Follow up questions - continuing with earlier answers.
- Covering uncovered topics.

Duration

2 hours

Materials Needed

Paper, pens, coloured markers, white board.

Workshop Process

Part I - What is Interviewing and How to Do it?

Group Size: Full Class

Duration: 30 minutes of explaining to the full class, based on the information above.

1. Mock Interview Demonstration among Facilitators

Group Size: Full Class

Duration: 30 minutes

Facilitators take on three roles:

- Interviewer
- Interviewee
- Observer/ Commentator

Facilitators comment on the questions as well as offer observations about the interviewee's responses and body language

Questions for the mock interview: What types of schools have you taught in? (Or something similar based on an understanding of the facilitators' and participants' backgrounds).

The facilitators should involve the participants and encourage them to comment on the questions before providing their own. For instance, which questions were good or bad? Why did they ask what they did?

Participants should recognise when to use probing techniques (Can you tell me more? Why do you think that happened? What could have been done differently?). How does one deal with emotions and feelings? How does ask difficult questions? How to recognise what has not been said (and what does it imply)? How to formulate different ways of asking the same question (For example, instead of asking if they have experienced bullying in schools, it may be better to ask if they had ever heard of it, and continue the conversation from there.

Part II – Interview Practice

Group Size: 3 or 4 (Interviewer, Interviewee and 1 or 2 Observers)

Total Duration: 30 minutes

1. Interview

Duration: 20 minutes

Question: What are the types of schools you have experienced? Which ones do you like and why? (The question can be altered to reflect the needs of the specific group).

The observers writes down the questions and notes the answers (Fig 9).

2. Interview Debrief

Duration: 10 minutes

The facilitators should discuss the interview process and develop three key take-aways from the experience. The points could be from the perspective of any group member.

Back to the full class, each group should offer three points they noted or reflected upon from the interview process. Thereafter, the facilitators should share their reflections on the process.

Figure 9: Interview in Groups

Reflections

- Interviewing is a relationship/ trust building exercise between the person telling the story and the one listening.
- The focus must be on developing questions based on the interviewee's responses.
- How does the interviewee hear the questions?
- Ask the observers to comment on what they saw and heard during the mock interview. Think about the aim of the interview.
- Facilitators must note that there needs to be time for preparation and work before starting the interview.
- Facilitators can conclude with providing guidance on how to use this technique in the classroom.
- Facilitators must focus on the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee, perhaps develop a focus for the interview (i.e. objects) as a 'neutral' way to gather information. They can talk about how to approach the interviewee and stress that the interview does not need to happen all at once and can even occur over several days or hours.
- The interview does not have to be static and can be combined with observations.

TTT Insights

Probing is difficult. One of our participants pointed out that many in her group did not feel comfortable asking a series of questions or probing to clarify the answers. She observed that asking questions provided them with a sense of authority (or hierarchy as mentioned at the beginning of this prompt) and the group members were more willing to agree on something rather than confront or push to get the details out.

One of the unexpected outcomes of the interview prompt, aside from developing questioning and listening skills, is to get comfortable with disagreements and preparing the participants to be receptive to feedback, criticism and probing. Disagreeing is a welcome skill for the collective interview prompt.

The interviewer's effort, or empathy, is their attempt to imagine how the interviewee feels about what is being talked about. Listening to the interviewee, sometimes called rapport, identification, insight or understanding another's point of view - can have a direct correlation with the quality of the narrative story that emerges.

The most important thing to remember is that each interviewee is an individual. Their stories are valuable because these reflect their first-hand experiences. No two interviews will therefore be alike, even with the exact same question. The interview should develop in ways that draw out personal experiences, allowing comparison of different responses to the same points.

Further Resources

Merriam, S., and Tisdell, E. J. 2015. Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation. Jossey-Bass.

Schaffer, F. C. 2014. Ordinary Language Interviewing.

Story Prompt 6

Paraphrasing: Making Stories Meaningful

We gradually shift from empowering our participants to tell their own stories, to helping them tell other peoples' stories. Paraphrasing is turning an oral story, developed individually or collectively, as a chain story or through interviews, into a reader friendly text by finding the story arc and rearranging, clarifying, summarising and rewriting it with the target audience in mind.

When we paraphrase, we restate others' ideas in our own words, often in order to summarise them or reduce the number of words used. We write the meaning of the author's ideas. We may use some of the author's key terms, but many of our own words and sentence structures. Effective paraphrasing includes more than one of the following techniques:

- Changing a word from one tense to another (past to present), changing from active to passive voice and first person to third person (attribution signal).
- Using synonyms.
- Changing sentence structures to reduce the number of words and using different connecting words.
- Using simplified words with the target audience in mind.

Milestones/ Learning Points

- Reinforce listening.
- Identify the story arc.
- Write with clarity.
- Understand that we hear and remember different parts of the same story.

Duration

2.5 hours

Materials Needed

Paper, pens, coloured markers, white board.

Workshop Process

Part I – Narrating and Listening

Group Size: Full Class

Duration: 45 minutes

One of the facilitators narrates a story about something that happened to them in the recent past. This should be an example that participants can relate to. In our workshop, the examples included online fraud, gambling by students and taking children to a fire station.

For example, the story in the text box was used in a workshop. The whole class asked questions to clarify different points in the story (Fig 10) using,

- The 5Ws and 1H questions (what, where, when, who, why and how).
- Emotions and feelings emerging from the story.

The facilitator can elaborate on the story based on the questions asked and resulting discussion.

Example of Story to be Paraphrased

Last December, I got a chance to share about Karenni history at a local university. Since the University is in a rural area, I saw a lot of ducks wandering around the campus. Every morning, a duck came and looked at me as I washed my face. The ducks there are fearless, as the people neither eat them nor hurt them. The ducks wander around the campus undisturbed, across the green and the buildings.

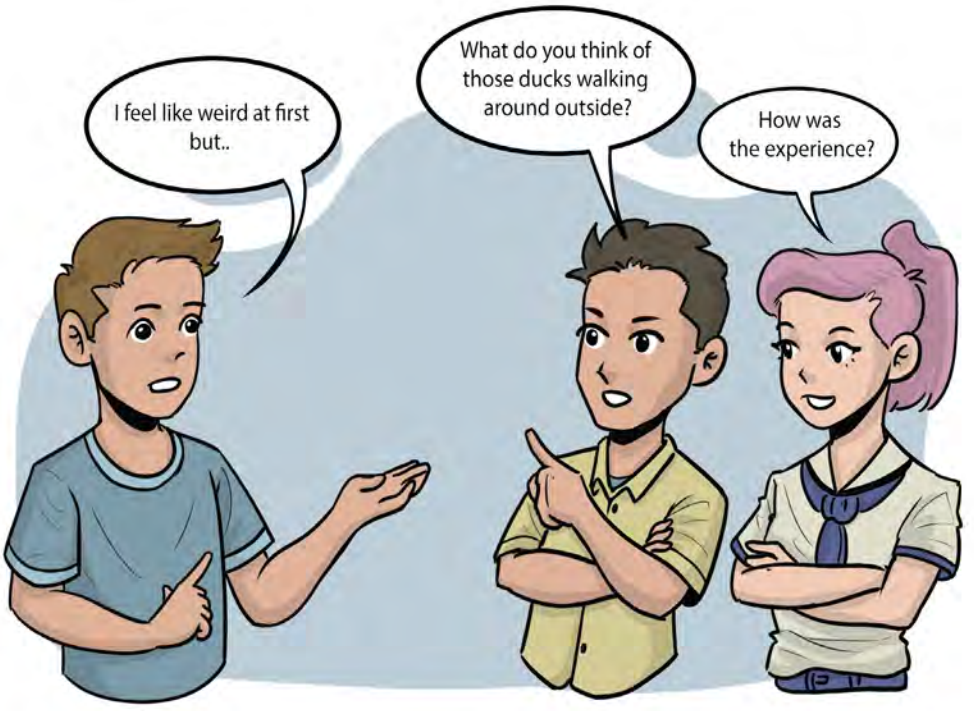

Figure 10: Clarifying the fine points in the Story

Notes

- Facilitators must be prepared to change the content of the story based on the audience. For instance, for young school children, sentences should be kept short and the story less abstract.
- They must pay attention to the balance between the breadth and the depth of the story.

Part II - Writing

Group Size: Full Class

Duration: 1 hour

Each participant should rewrite a story, title it, present it to the others and respond to their questions. In writing the story, they should recollect what they originally heard and pay attention to the audience they are writing for.

The discussion and reflection should be undertaken in groups of four, in which each person reads aloud their story, they all compare their versions with the others from the group and together pick the story that is closest to the original.

Thereafter, each group must share its chosen version with the entire class for comments. The facilitators should point out the beginning, middle and end of the stories as the story arc; comment on the titles as a way to bring the reader into the story from the beginning and make sure their language suits the intended audience.

Reflections

- People hear what they want to hear. Individual participants will remember different details of the same story.
- Facilitators must check the stories for coherence.
- The paraphrased versions must be compared with the original story.
- Using a photograph, object or recorded sound to help the telling of the story is possible. The storyteller must annotate/ describe what is happening in that, where the photo or sound is from, what time of day and what they were doing.
- The audience of the paraphrased story must be borne in mind.

TTT Insights

When we listen, we often listen with our biases, i.e. we tease out pieces of information we expect to hear or those that confirm our worldviews. Paraphrasing is a good method of checking our biases and representing others' stories in an accurate way, using the skills we have been developing. It is important to remember that while paraphrasing, we are retelling a event that has been experienced by the storyteller.

It is important to remember that while readers may think that they have received all the information shared by the narrator, in reality they are only as close to the narrator's experience as a television viewer who sees a rain forest on the screen and assumes they understand its many sounds, images and textures.

When we lead storytelling sessions with children, we also help them develop the skills to clarify details. This helps them come to a consensus on the key elements of a story.

Story Prompt 7

Biographies of Things

It can take time for a narrator to relax into their story. They may even need some help remembering events. If they have photographs or pictures, newspaper cuttings or some other artefact, they could be asked about those objects. Objects can help to get a conversation flowing.

The focus of this prompt is on the object - to gather information on the object and understand why it is important to the interviewee.

Having the object as the focus can open up and deepen conversations, as the emphasis shifts from the individual to the 'thing'. Since this 'thing' is located in a particular place and time, this exercise also reinforces situated knowledge, memories and histories.

Preparation

History exists all around us, though it is generally taught through the stories of famous figures and events. When we hear of people, places and things in the stories told by our families and neighbours, we experience history as it touches our lives.

This activity uses objects to share memories and stories about a person's past/present. Each participant must be asked to bring an object that is meaningful to them to share at the workshop. Interviewing participants about these objects enables everyone present to understand their place in peoples' histories, connecting individual stories to larger histories and allowing them to be written down, so they are not forgotten.

Biographies of things are a good entry to place-based education, and to inclusive learning and more representative curriculum. For example, stories about kitchen tools or spices reveal the ethnic diversity of a place and of various ecologies, which can shift the majority, elite-centred educational goals and pedagogies to more inclusive and democratic

content. This lets learners from different backgrounds see themselves and their places reflected in the learning materials.

Milestones/ Learning Points

- Explore the familiar to provoke memories and experiences through objects, reinforcing that there are stories in everyday life.
- Practise interviewing, paraphrasing and storytelling skills.
- Emphasise the intersections between place-based education and community storytelling.

Duration

3.5 hours (up to half a day)

Materials Needed

- Each participant brings an object that they want to share at the workshop.
- Paper, pens, coloured markers, white board.
- Mobile phones to click photographs, an online tool to share them, a laptop and a projector to project the photographs.

Workshop Process

Part 1 - Mock Example

Group Size: Full Class
Duration: 30 minutes

The facilitators should give a five-minute demonstration to the class, using their own object/s to demonstrate how they can be repositories of a person's associated memories. For example, in our workshop, we used 'this is my watch...' as a prompt to begin a story. Participants questions about this object led them to realise that objects have:

- Personal and emotional connections.
- Function and purpose.
- Connections to a particular place and situation.
- Links to a specific time and phase in a person's life.

This exercise requires the participants learn how to ask questions and listen to answers - as was introduced in the interview story prompts. The points above are to be used as guides for this exercise.

Part II - Group Work

Group Size: 4 Participants
Duration: 80 minutes

1. Sharing and Selection

Duration: 10 minutes

In each group, every participant shows their object and briefly shares the story behind it. The group picks two objects (A and B) from among them to go to the next round. The facilitators must ensure that participants stick to the time and do not share too many details yet.

2. Object A

Duration: 20 minutes

Using the learnings from the interview story prompts, participants ask questions about object A.

Person1: Interviewee (with Object A)
Person 2: Interviewer
Person 3: Interviewer
Person 4: Observer (with Object B)

3. Object B

Duration: 20 minutes

Repeat as above, but for object B.
Person 1: Interviewee (formerly #4)
Person 2*: Interviewer (with object A)
Person 3*: Interviewer
Person 4*: Observer

* In this round, it is important to rotate the roles of the interviewers.

3. *Making an Object story.*

Duration: 30 minutes

Each group picks one object in order to create its story. Using the skills from the paraphrasing exercise, participants ask questions and get more information about the object.

- Each group writes one five-minute story, keeping the requirements of a story arc in mind.
- The story and a picture of the object are shared with the whole class.

Addicted to Head Fiddle - (an object story from our Chiang Mai workshop)

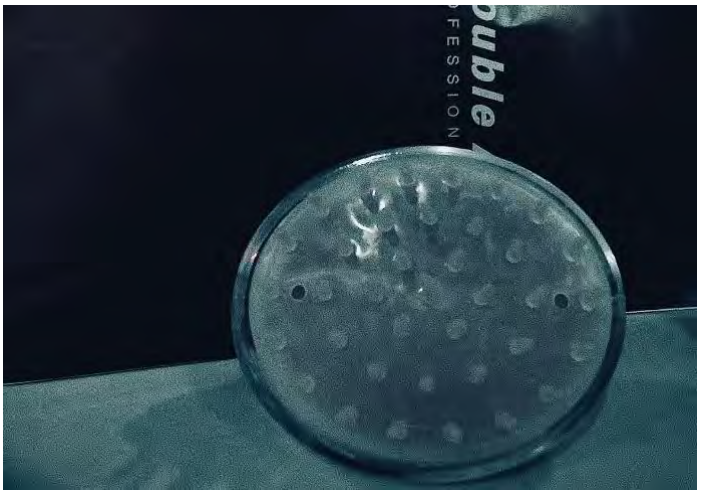

Figure 11: Story of Object: Head Fiddle (Hair Brush)
Photo courtesy TTT team

When I was young, my hair was very good. There were millions of strands. But, as a young woman, it got damaged from a lot of hair straightening. Little by little, I realised that I was going to have to take care of my hair. I understood that I had to choose and buy things carefully for my scalp. At that time, I saw a review of the hairbrush I am using now on Facebook. This brush is made of silicone and is different from other brushes. I knew from the review that there would be reduced hair loss from it. And you could massage the head using it.

I searched for it because I really wanted it, but could not find it anywhere. Deliveries do not reach the village in which I live. I liked the hairbrush so much that I searched for it desperately for almost a year and finally went to Yangon three months ago to find it. I like to take care of myself, so I carry it with me wherever I go. It suits my hair, so I always use it. It's something I had been looking for almost a year, so I really cherish it. I don't think I'd fall for a better and more expensive hairbrush now. Because I've been obsessed with just one thing since I was young, and it is this little Head Fiddle of mine.

Part III - Presentation

Group Size: Full Class
Duration: 50 minutes

Each group presents its final object story from Part II to the class. The facilitators reflect on them and debrief on oral histories, interviewing and active listening.

Reflections

- Bringing place-based education through local objects by creating stories.
- We are always editing our stories, every time we tell or write them.
- Stories have life: they are a part of us.
- Stories have power and emotions and can create vulnerability.
- Stories engage both tellers and listeners.
- The facilitators should be ready to think about how to handle any difficult/ traumatic feelings that may arise. In such situations, we recommend that:
  1. Telling, writing and listening all be part of the healing process.
  2. The teller is given the space to tell their story comfortably.
  3. Silence is acceptable - it's part of the telling.
  4. The teller should not be made anxious.
  5. There should be no judgement, only listening.
  6. No solutions need to be offered to the teller.

TTT Insights

The Biographies of Things session in our workshop brought participants together as everyone felt they could share their stories in the languages they were comfortable in and others listened with empathy. We conducted our workshop during the ongoing resistance in Myanmar in 2023 and many participants experienced traumas. Several biographies they shared were related to the resistance – a pair of sandals a fellow comrade gave to a soldier as gift, an identity card for a voting station duty (many teachers boycotted the military after many years, rebuilding the country at the frontlines, including voting station duties and counting ballots for the elections that the military claimed were rigged - the main justification for them to stage the coup), and a water bottle an undocumented young man carried for his journey from a border town to the capital of Thailand, using underground routes away from the checkpoints.

Biographies of Things are a good resource for both adults and children to learn about their places, the people in them and their local histories.

Further Resources

Sarkar, S., Murali, M. and Najib R. 2022. Between Memory and History: The Neighbourhood Museum Programme. Centre for Community Knowledge, Ambedkar University Delhi.

Llewellyn. K. R. and Ng-A-Fook, N. 2017. Oral History and Education: Theories, Dilemmas, and Practices. Palgrave Macmillan.

Story Prompt 8

Storyboards: The Language of Storytelling

A storyboard is a sketch that organises a story in the flow of its contents. It focuses on developing the story's beginning, middle and end, refining the story arc in order to make it powerful and convincing. It also emphasises how the arrangement of information matters in how a story is understood, making it a significant medium to highlight the stories of a place.

A storyboard can be created using words, images or a combination of both.

Preparation

The content for the storyboard prompt comes from a field visit in which the participants had been asked to take photographs and/ or record sounds and voices. If there has been no field visit, other experiences can be used. The activity is a combination of memory, listening, history and objects.

The following is a storyboard example with both images and text. Participants will need to decide on the basis of the following:

What part of the story belongs in text?

Text can be used to describe the background of a story (sometimes in combination with photographs); to describe a process (sometimes in combination with graphics) or to provide first-person accounts of an event.

What pieces of the story work best in still photographs?

Still photographs are the best medium for emphasising a strong emotion, for staying with an important point in a story or to create a particular mood.

Information in each frame should complement each other, not be repititive.

A little overlap among them is all right, but the attempt should be to match each element of the story with the medium that best conveys it.

Know what you want to say.

The focus should be on the (visual) sequence: i.e. the order in which things happen. Participants will begin to shift their thinking to focus on the visuals of their stories, for instance, how is this sequence of images persuasive or how do they together make an argument?

Steps to Create a Storyboard

Step 1: Sketch the Story Flow.

Participants should think about the story and the story arc. Who are the characters? What is the core tension? On a sheet of paper, they should jot down the key moments of the story in separate lines, thinking about the moments to write about and what will be shown in text, photographs or images.

Step 2: Making Storyboard Frames.

A sheet of paper should be divided into rectangles to create panels. What is to be said/ conveyed in each panel should be decided and the key moment from Step 1 added into a panel.

Multiple panels suggest a fast pace, while few panels create a slow, more dramatic flow to the story.

Step 3: Fill the Frames.

- In each panel, what will unfold in the story should be lightly sketched.
- Focus on the composition: Where are the characters positioned? What are they doing? What will the background look like?
- Capture the emotion: Facial expressions and body language must be used to show how the characters are feeling.
- Keep it simple: Details are not a factor at this stage and stick figures should be totally acceptable.

Step 4: Refine and Add Details.

Once there is a rough sketch of the story, it is time to add details.

- Think about perspectives. Will they use close-up for dramatic moments or panorama to show the environment?
- They must write down notes or dialogues they want to include in the final panels.

The storyboard should be used as a guide when taking photographs. It must be remembered though, that it is just a plan and participants should feel free to get creative and add their own unique touches during the shoot.

Milestones/ Learning Points

- Define the parameters of the story within available resources and time.
- Organise and define the focus of the story: what do you want to say?
- Figure out what medium/ form of writing is best suited for each part of the story.

Duration

3.5 hours (up to half a day)

Materials Needed

- Large poster paper and coloured markers to write the story and draw the frames for the storyboard.
- A laptop and a projector to project the photographs.

Workshop Process

Part 1 – Story Sequences

Group Size: Full Class

Duration: 40 minutes

The facilitators should explain what storyboarding is and what factors to consider while undertaking it. For illustration, they could draw a storyboard with five frames that depict the sequence of the cutting of an apple (Fig 12).

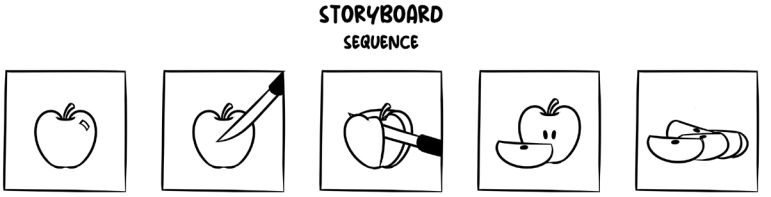

Figure 12: Storyboarding: How to Cut an Apple

The facilitators should then ask for five sequential photographs (Fig 13) from a participant, taken during the field visit. Playing around with their sequence, moving the order of the pictures, each time ending with a different story (Fig 14 A & B) . It is interesting to note here that the pictures that create a particular flow of a story can sometimes be rearranged to create different stories.

Figure 13. Pictures from Lifelong Learning Centre, Payap U, Chiang Mai

A. An Empty Library

B. A Library at Work

Figure 14 : Same Photographs, Different Stories

Part II - Drawing of Frames

Group Size: 4 Participants
Duration: 40 minutes

Participants should be asked to draw storyboards for their stories, by making their frames on paper. They should:

- Pick a story from any previous prompt.
- Tell the story in three to five frames/ photographs.
- Present the storyline of the visual sequence.

The drawing of the storyboard per se does not have to be perfect. As long as it illustrates the storyline, it is a good set of frames. The photographs do not have to be replicated on paper.

Part III - Presenting to the Group

Group Size: Full Class
Duration: 50 minutes

Participants should be asked to hold up their posters with the frames of drawings and tell their stories to the full class, in three to five minutes (Fig 15).

The facilitators must give their comments and feedback for the possible revision of the storyboards.

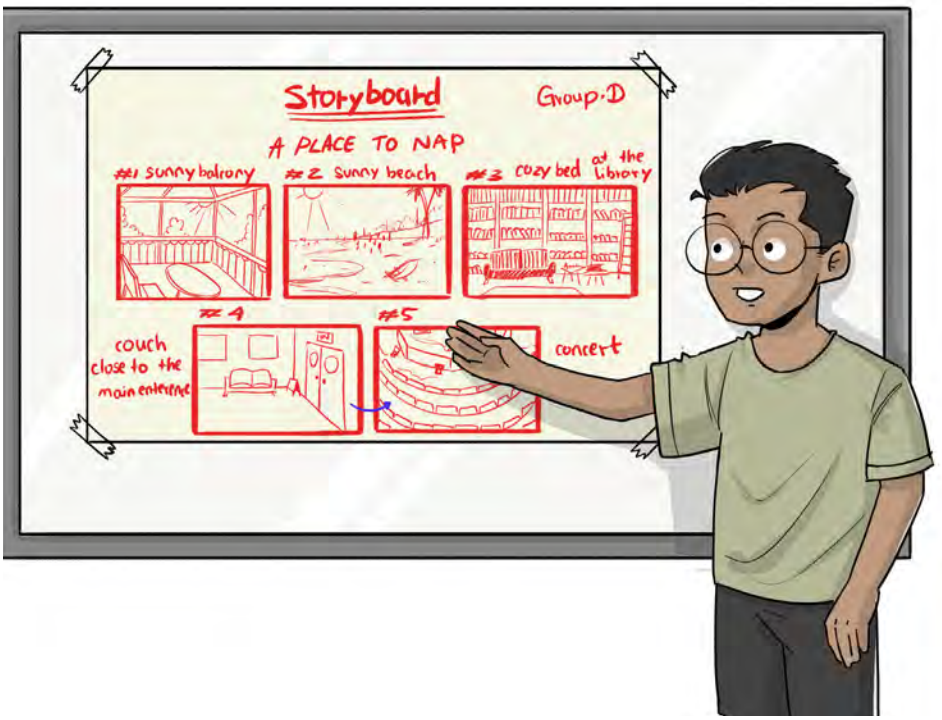

Figure 15: A Storyboard

Part IV - Group Revision

Group Size: Full Class
Duration: 30 minutes

Upon receiving comments, revisions should be made by the participants and, if needed, new storyboards should be drawn.

Reflections

- The story arc (beginning, middle, end) is important.
- The characters and plot lines should be believable.
- The sequence of the stories should be considered seriously.
- Similarly, the objective of the stories should be clear. How do the photographs and stories support each other?
- The frames should not be overcrowded. (Refer to the photography section for further consideration, such as the importance of foreground and background).
- There should not be repetition of any textual, visual or aural elements.
- There is an economy of a story: less is more.

Preparing for the Final Project

The facilitators should assign some homework at the end of the penultimate day. Participants should be invited to think (but not yet write/ draw) about stories, sounds and places from their lives they want others to know. They should bear in mind people, places and things.

TTT Insights

At our workshop, participants were surprised that the same set of photographs could narrate different stories, offering different understandings of the same place, i.e. the library. This prompt can therefore help understanding how selection determines perspectives and bias, but also encourage the variation of the same materials to tell different stories.

Further Resources

Teacher Resources. StoryboardThat. https://www.storyboardthat.com/articles/education/teacher-resources/.

Start-to-Finish Storyboarding. UC Berkeley Advanced Media Institute. https://multimedia.journalism.berkeley.edu/tutorials/start-to-finish-storyboarding/.

Introduction to Storyboarding. Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. https://iris.siue.edu/brighter-future/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2018/08/Introduction-to-Storyboarding.pdf

Story Prompt 9

A Place-Based Story

The final day of the workshop should be dedicated entirely to the final projects of the participants, which build from the previous day's homework. It is an opportunity for participants to showcase their learning outcomes and to present their stories.

It is critical that facilitators make minimal interventions through this final session and empower the participants and their audience. It also means that the working language in the classroom is the language that participants are most comfortable with and not what the facilitators have been using (if different). The highlight of the day is that each participant demonstrates their storytelling skills that celebrate their lives and experiences.

Preparation

On the day before this prompt, the facilitators should ask the participants to think of a story from their chosen setting of people, places and things.

Milestones/Learning Points

- The stories should be developed individually.
- Every participant should be given the time and space to share their story and the audience to discuss others' stories.
- Stories should also be selected for further development, refinement and potential publication/ sharing.

Duration

Full Day

Materials Needed

- Mobile phones and online tools or A4 sheets of paper to write the stories.
- Projector to share the stories.

Workshop Process

Part I - Create Your Story

Group Size: Individual Activity

Duration: 1 hour

The stories created by the participants should:

- Have a title.
- Be written on paper or digitally (.ppt, .doc, written on a padlet or any other form).
- Use a minimum of one photograph or any other type of media and a 50-100-word text piece in a language of their choice.

They should be assured that this is just their first draft, which they should give their best, but it need not be perfect.

Part II - Present Your Story

Group Size: Full Class

Duration: Rest of the day

The facilitators must allow 20 minutes per individual story, including comments from the other participants (mostly on the content) and the facilitators (mostly on the structure).

The facilitators can choose to engage in a general discussion with the entire class (Fig 16) to further develop or revise some of the stories, prompting the participants to:

- Imagine sounds and video elements with the stories.
- Think about how they could present their stories, from comics to podcasts and more.

Figure 16: Sharing the Final Project

Reflections

- How do participants react to each other's stories? What do they share, what are the questions they ask and what are their responses?
- How are the stories linked to the images? This should be considered as the participants think about revisions to their stories.
- Stories have their own lives: an individual tells one story, but people hear it based on their own experiences.
- The questions asked reflect the focal points that the listeners have connected with.
- It might be helpful to allow participants to revise their stories, based on peer feedback.

TTT Insights

The last day of our workshop was fully devoted to the participants and their stories. Each participant found the space to think about which elements and activities they wanted to incorporate in their narration. The facilitators did not provide much feedback, letting the participants use their stories as bridges to further conversations. These conversations were less about improving the stories and more about understanding each others' thought processes and stories.

Final Reflection

It is worth repeating here why we need to tell stories or why our stories matter. While we have focussed a lot on the technical aspects of storytelling, i.e. 'how' we tell stories, at this point, let us look at 'what' is the story we want to tell. The facilitators must emphasise that every experience is a story to tell and that sharing stories enriches our lives, wherefrom derives the power of stories.

Sample Reading Material with Discussion Questions

We present two examples from our Workshop's final projects below - ***Do you believe Objects have Souls too?*** and ***Whispers of the Reminiscence***, that can be used as reading material for participants in other workshops. We have developed several questions for both young and old readers, for each of the short stories.

Do you believe Objects have Souls too?

by Hnin Wai

Do you believe objects have souls too? I believe they do, because of a particular object - my sandals. They were a gift from my friend, Kay Kayy. I met Kay Kayy at a very strange time in my life. Six months after our country Myanmar fell under dictatorship, I joined the resistance and went to a liberated area in the far south of the country.

I met Kay Kayy there. She had been there before my arrival. She was short, smart, hardworking, kind and hot-headed. She had deep affection for the character 'Snoopy'. We bonded over art, literature and a zero-tolerance policy towards sexism - our shared interests. We became sisters, not by blood, but by spirit. I looked up to her. She protected me like her family. Together, we faced challenges and took care of each other.

As a present for my 21st birthday, she gave me a pair of sandals - durable, lightweight and comfortable for hiking, knowing that my footwear caused me difficulties. One day she went on a work trip, promising to be back with my favourite snacks the same night. However, she never returned. She was seized by the military on the way. I couldn't believe it.

Since we lived together in the same barrack, it became my duty to clear out her things. How could I? Living in denial, I kept telling myself that she would come back. The image of her wearing her favourite Snoopy T-Shirt, assuring me she would return, remained in my mind. It took me a month to realise she wouldn't return. The only person who made me feel at home was gone.

I was wearing the same sandals when I heard the news of her getting a seven-year sentence in prison. I wear those sandals all the time now - in the jungle, on the mountain, through the mud and on concrete roads. Whenever I wear them, I feel that she's with me. They have become a part of me. So, I have to say, I believe objects have souls too.

Discussion Questions For Young Readers

1. Why are the sandals important to the storyteller?

(The sandals were a gift from a friend who was captured by the military. The sandals are all that the storyteller has to remember her friend by.)

2. Have you ever received a gift that is as important as the sandals in this story? Why was/ is it important to you?

(The gift could be a meal, an object, an experience or anything else that is valuable to them.)

Discussion Questions For Older Readers

1. Do you think objects have souls?

(This is a reflection question and answers will vary based on the reader. All kinds of answers are possible, but the responses should reference the story and how the author felt that objects have souls.)

2. What does this story tell you about the lives of people in the resistance movement in Myanmar?
3. Do you have a similar object that reminds/ reminded you of someone? Can you share that story with the other participants?
4. Why do you think the storyteller and her friend bonded over arts, literature and a zero-tolerance policy to sexism?

Whispers of the Reminiscence

by Mi Lai

Reminiscence involves a multitude of emotions - the good, the bad, the sad and the happy, and also yearnings. For me, reminiscence is wrapped in a piece of my mother's longyi. She gave it to me before my journey, as per our tradition, and now it serves as a reminder of my yearning and longing for home.

Even though things are going well in the present, I find myself longing for my mother and my home in the Anyar region. Even though there will be insufficient electricity and water supply, being with my family will bring me a sense of safety and comfort. Therefore, I have made the decision to return home one day, while my mother is still alive.

I often think about those, who, like me, are separated from their families and homes due to conflict in our country. My heart goes out to them and I pray for their well-being and their reunion with their loved ones. For me, this piece of longyi holds immense value, since it holds an intimate connection with my family.

Discussion Questions For Young Readers

1. If you have to go away from your home on a journey, what would you carry that will remind you of your family?

(The storyteller speaks about the longyi as a connection to their family. Readers can think of other things that remind them of their family or home.)

2. Why do you think the storyteller has had to leave their home? Do you know of anyone who has been forced to leave their home?

Discussion Questions For Older Readers

1. What is the storyteller reminiscing about? Does it make you reminisce about something in your own life?
2. Are there any specific objects that families often give to their children who leave home in your region? Could you share that tradition with the others?
3. What things and/ or places make you feel like home when you are away?

Appendix I

Pre-Training and Post-Training Questionnaires

The questionnaires should be written bilingually, in English and in the participants' native language. Participants can fill them in either language, either online or on paper. All questionnaires must be filled anonymously.

A. Pre-Training Questionnaire

The answers will be used to tailor the training format and the results will not be shared with anyone.

1. Gender
2. Age
3. What is your highest level of formal or informal education?
4. How do you rate your English language level? (From 1 to 5, with 1 being basic and 5 being native/ near native.)
5. What languages do you speak, other than Burmese and English, if any?
6. Are you comfortable working online and taking online sessions?
7. Do you have any teaching experience?

   If yes,
   - Of how many years?
   - What was/ is the age group of your students?
   - Where were/ are you teaching/ working?

   If no,
   - Are you connected with media in any way – as writer, content creator, blogger, etc.?

. What other experiences do you have that are relevant to story making, storytelling and/ or place-based education?

. Please tell us, in no more than three sentences, what you want to learn from this training.

B. Post-Training Questionnaire

To answer single choice questions,

please choose a number between 1 and 5, with

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

Technical (Single Choice)

. I found the training structure clear.
. I found the instructions easy to follow.
. I think the following format used during the training was helpful for:
    - Whole Class Discussion.
    - Group Work.
    - Site/ Field Visits.
. I had no problem following the mix of languages in the training.
. I have good access to and know how to use the online tools.
. I feel my feedback was considered during the course of this training.
. I think the pace and delivery method of the training suited me.
. Optional question - Please provide comments or suggestions on how to improve the organisation of the training, such as the structure, the method, the delivery or the tools.

Content (Single Choice)

. I found the training interesting and learned something new.
. The training explored key issues when using storytelling and place-based education. I had not really considered these issues prior to attending the session.
. This training has changed my perception and understanding of storytelling and place-based education.
. I will follow up on the ideas discussed during the training.
. I will change my approach in my working environment as a result of this training.
. Rank the following activities, from the one that inspired you most to the one that needs to be better designed. Put the one you like the most in the first place and the one you like the least in the last place.
    - Names Tell Stories
    - Mapping the Visible and the Invisible
    - The Logic of Storytelling through Chain Stories
    - Photographs: Visualising Your Stories
    - Listening to Others through Interviewing.
    - Biographies of Things
    - Storyboards: The Language of Storytelling
. Optional question - Please provide comments or suggestions on how the workshop has changed your understanding of using storytelling and place-based education in your working environment.

Organisation (Single Choice)

. I made new connections with people during this training.
. Optional question - Do you have any other comments about how to better organise similar events in the future?

Final (Optional)

. Would you like to participate in future workshops or similar events? (Yes/ No)
. Do you have any other comments or things to say about this training?

Appendix II

Sample Schedule Workshop in Chiang Mai, November 2023

In this workshop, we organised eight activities across four days.

Day 1: Stories and Places

Objectives of the Day

To introduce two key themes of the Workshop on the very first day through two activities and end with a review upon the overlapping areas of these two themes.

- Names Tell Stories
- Mapping Visible and Invisible Surroundings
- Photovoice - Images Speak

Day 2: Active Listening

Objectives of the Day

To listen to what the others are saying and observe what is happening in the surrounding environment, accumulating and digesting information obtained this way, to build stories collectively.

- All Make One Story
- Interviewing or Listening to Others
- Biographies of Things

Day 3: Build Your Story

Objectives of the Day

To use skills from activities such as names (story arc), photographs, interviewing and paraphrasing developed on the previous days to build object-based and place-based stories.

We spent the first half of the day visiting a site, which provided the content for the storyboard activity.

- Storyboards: The Language of Storytelling

Day 4: Showcase the Power of Place-Based Storytelling

Objectives of the Day

To synthesise all the learnings from various activities into one final outcome.

- A Place-Based Story

The Teacher Training Toolkit Group

Online Sessions among TTT Group Members at DeKalb, Delhi, Leiden and Chiang Mai (clockwise from top left)

Yi Li

I am a historian by training, researching and teaching Modern Asian History and Migration in a Welsh university. In this field, oral history is a vital and viable channel through which the past can be recollected, especially among those who do not usually find access to archives and other privileged spaces. Yet, there is a hidden disparity between story collectors (me as a historian) and storytellers (my 'informants'). What I find really exciting in this endeavour is the absolute central role of stories and storytellers from the community and I am more than happy being a simple listener, enjoying the act of listening.

Surajit Sarkar

In 2004, I co-founded the video+arts initiative, Catapult Arts Caravan – a performance group of artists and community workers in Central India. Combining oral narratives, public discussions, expressive art forms and digital technologies, these outdoor interactive performances have been sites of reflection and discussion on local concerns (www.jatantrust.org/caravan). In 2010, after two decades of association with grassroots organisations in Central India, I became a member of the founding group of the Centre for Community Knowledge, Ambedkar University Delhi, pestering friendly scholars with requests for information connected to lesser known and unfamiliar challenges and experiences.

Tharaphi Than

As someone who left Burma at 21, my heart is always there. I sought every opportunity to be close to home. Since the 2021 coup, I have been working with educators, weavers, tailors, farmers, workers and environmentalists, in their resistance against the military. Each of them has great stories to tell and through this Toolkit, I am teaching myself and others to bring those stories out. When not working with them, I teach and research at the Northern Illinois University in the US.

Jyothi Thrivikraman

My training is in Global Health and Policy and I am also a qualitative researcher. My work in the last few years has begun to incorporate more participatory approaches, including storytelling. I am drawn to this endeavour due to this team that has been incredibly supportive, working in a non-hierarchical manner. This Project is an opportunity to work and think differently: collaborating, learning and listening to each other, and also to the educators in Myanmar. It also renews the discussion on the location of knowledge and who/where it is (re)produced. We are drawn together by the idea of 'education as resistance', because anyone and everyone can tell a story.