

Build A Story Activity



OVERVIEW

This activity will inspire advanced learners to build their comprehension, speaking and storytelling skills. Improvisation with others also builds group creativity, connection, collaboration and trust in learning communities. This fun and engaging activity is sure to build up a language learners' confidence and willingness to take risks, use the words they know, and to master new words, all while staying in the Anishinaabemowin language.

LEARNING GOALS

- Learners will develop their ability to think in the language on the spot.
- Learners will gain experience saying the words and phrases they already know.
- Learners will gain experience asking for clarification in the language.
- Learners will gain confidence taking risks required to grow.
- Learners will identify areas of the language they would like to study further.
- Learners will gain experience staying in the language as much as possible.

MATERIALS

- A group of learners who are able to make sentences and understand phrases in the language
- Advanced learners or first language speakers who are able to support and facilitate the conversation

TIME REQUIRED

20 Minutes

STEPS TO FOLLOW

1. Consider the comfort level and ability of the learners. Some people find it helpful to have learners close their eyes or face away from each other so they can focus on listening and speaking. Online, this can be done by turning the participants' video cameras off.
2. The facilitator explains the activity. Players take turns telling a story one sentence or two sentences at a time. You can add whatever you want to the story, but it must build on what others have already added. This helps to keep the activity flowing.
3. More advanced learners or speakers can help others by speaking slowly, using phrases that are familiar and rephrasing the sentence if required.
4. Be generous in your interpretations, if you know what is intended by the speaker, accept that contribution, even if it may not be stated correctly.
5. Ask for help, seek clarification and check for comprehension if you feel it is needed, all of this is a part of learning and having fun.
6. The instructor starts a group storytelling activity with one opening line, with an open ending. Some examples of how the story can be started include "One day I was walking down the road and I saw...", or "I was in the forest and heard..."
7. The next person takes over where the first person left off.
8. Whatever the person said before you is now true for you too. Each person adds a minimum of one or two sentences to the story. Additions can be shorter or longer, depending on the level of each learner.
9. Everyone continues telling the story until everyone has had a turn.
10. Celebrate every round of storytelling. This exercise is all about risk taking, connecting and giving ourselves opportunities to learn and grow.

ADAPTATIONS

1. To prepare learners for improv, provide them with a topic or key phrases in advance of the session to help them prepare.
2. Try having learners stand to volunteer to take the next line, rather than passing one at a time.

“IMPROV IS ALL ABOUT REMOVING THE SENSE OF FAILURE. IN ORDER TO GROW, YOU HAVE TO FAIL. IN SOME IMPROV CLASSES, WHEN STUDENTS GET THAT FEELING OF “I SCREWED UP” THEY TAKE A ‘FAILURE BOW’ - A BOW, PAIRED WITH THE DECLARATION “I FAILED!” THE REST OF THE CLASS WILL CLAP AND CHEER, AFFIRMING THE CHANCE THAT WAS TAKEN.”

Jen, Oleniczak, “Improv(e) your teaching” (January 20, 2013)

<https://artmuseumteaching.com/2013/01/20/improve-your-teaching/>

See our Build A Story Video at <https://youtu.be/CO5bbwiaWJI> for a demonstration of this activity!