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ACTIVITIES & METHODS GUIDE

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Digital Story Training Course

Ballyjamesduff, Ireland · 04–08 August 2025

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Introduction

This document presents the activities delivered during the *Digital Story Training Course*, held in Ballyjamesduff, Ireland, from 04–08 August 2025.

The training was developed as part of the project *Digital Story: From Community Building to Youth Employability*, an Erasmus+ small-scale partnership bringing together organisations from across Europe. The project explores how storytelling can support youth engagement, creativity, and employability, while strengthening connections between individuals and their communities.

Over the course of the training, participants engaged in four key areas: storytelling, understanding audiences, digital storytelling practices, and the ethics of storytelling. Each module was designed and delivered by a partner organisation, reflecting a collaborative and practice-based approach to learning.

This document brings together the methods and activities used throughout the training, offering a practical resource for youth workers, facilitators, and organisations interested in using storytelling in their work with young people.

This project was funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.

How to Tell a Story - Part One

Youth Center "Vinda"

1. Getting to know each other– Paper Airplanes

Time

~15 min

Participants

3 or more

Materials

A4 paper, pens/markers,
flipcharts with questions

Steps:

1. Participants make a circle (standing or sitting).
2. Each person makes a paper airplane and writes their name and the answer to the first question from the flipchart.
3. On the count of three, everyone throws their airplane across the room.
4. Each participant picks up the airplane closest to them.
5. They answer the next question on the airplane, write their name, and repeat the process.
6. Continue until all questions are answered.
7. At the end, each participant takes the closest airplane, opens it, and reads all answers – creating a short collective story.

2. Main Activity – Creating a Story (Fruit Salad Method)

Time

~80 min

Steps:

1. Each participant gets a slip of paper with a fruit name – they remember it secretly.

Participants

2 or more

Materials

A4 paper, pens/markers, small slips of paper with fruit names (apple, peach, grape, etc.)

2. Everyone sits in a circle.
3. Each person writes a simple situation on their A4 sheet (real or imaginary), e.g., "I forgot to take my vitamins this morning."
4. All papers are placed on the floor.
5. The leader shouts: "Fruit Salad – [fruit] mix!" – participants with that fruit change seats. Repeat several times.
6. Each participant picks up someone else's paper and writes the next part of the story.
7. Papers are put down again, another Fruit Salad mix happens, and participants continue the story.
8. This repeats until all parts of the story are written (setting, characters, problem, solution, lesson).
9. The last person rewrites the paper into a complete story, adding details if needed.

Sharing & Reflection

Some stories can be read aloud. Reflection circle: participants draw their feelings in a weather-forecast style (sun, clouds, rain, rainbow, storm) and explain their meaning.

3. Main Activity – 3 Ways of Telling a Story

Time

~80 min

Participants

Steps:

1. Participants are already divided into groups of 3.
2. Previously created or already prepared stories by the host are placed in the

Whole group (in groups of 3)

Materials

Phones/laptops, editing apps or programs (Canva, CapCut, iMovie, etc.)

centre. Each group randomly picks one.

3. Groups have 7–10 min to read and get familiar with their story.
4. The leader explains that there are 3 ways to tell a story: video, photo, and audio.
5. Each group decides how to tell their story, considering the target audience and key message.
6. Groups have 40 min to create their story in the chosen format.

Presentations

First, all photo stories are shown. Then video stories. Finally, audio stories.

Reflections

Each participant explains how they felt telling the story.

Energisers

Greeting with the Body

Time: ~3 min · Participants: 3 or more ·
Materials: none / music in the background would give a good vibe.
Steps: Everyone walks around the room. They greet each other only with eyes, smiles, thumbs, shoulders, hips, feet, knees, etc. A quick and fun warm-up.

Human Statues

Time: ~3 min · Participants: Whole group (in small groups) · Materials: none / music in the background would give a good vibe. Steps: Everyone walks around the room. The leader calls out a statue shape (e.g., butterfly, house, tree). Participants quickly form statues in groups of 2, 3, 4, etc. The last statue is made in groups of 3 people – these will become the groups for the next activity.

Audience - Part Two

Balsių bendruomenė

1. Energiser: Friend Race

Time

~10 min

Participants

Recommended 10 or more
(an even number of
people)

Materials

Two small toys or soft
objects ("friends")

Steps:

1. Ask participants to stand in a circle.
2. Count off every second person – they belong to different teams (Team A and Team B).
3. Give the two "friends" (toys) to two players standing opposite each other, so the toys start from opposite sides of the circle (at 180°).
4. On the signal (e.g., "Go!"), each team starts passing their toy quickly around the circle from one team member to the next.
5. The goal is to make your team's toy catch up with the other team's toy while keeping the circle shape and fair play.
6. The team whose toy overtakes the other first wins the race!

Variation

For more fun, repeat the race in the opposite direction or add a rule that each player must say a positive word (e.g., "smile," "friendship," "energy") when passing the toy.

2. Main activity - Traditions in Pairs

Time

~10-15 min

Participants

2 or more

Materials

None (optional: paper and pens for notes)

Steps:

1. Ask participants to form pairs.
2. Each person shares their favourite tradition – it could be a holiday, a family gathering, a special meal, or a cultural event.
3. Encourage them to describe: When and how the tradition takes place; Who participates; Why is it meaningful or special to them?
4. After both partners have shared, each participant briefly introduces their partner's tradition to the whole group (1–2 sentences).

Variation

If there is more time, pairs can draw a small symbol or picture representing their partner's tradition and present it to the group.

3. Main activity - Roles

Time

~15 min

Participants

Any

Materials

Steps:

1. Place a large sheet of paper in the centre or hang it on the wall.
2. Ask participants to think about the different roles they have in life (e.g., boy/girl, son/daughter, student, friend, volunteer, employee, teammate, etc.).

One large sheet of paper or flipchart, markers/pens

3. One by one, participants come forward and write their roles on the shared paper.
4. When everyone has written, look at the list together and have a short group discussion: How many roles do we play in our lives? Are some roles more important than others? Do these roles ever overlap or create conflicts?
5. Conclude with a reflection that we all have many sides and responsibilities – and that understanding our roles helps us better understand ourselves and others.

4. Energiser: Numbers

Time

~5-10 min

Participants

Any

Materials

None

Steps:

1. Ask participants to stand in a circle (or stay where they are if space allows).
2. Explain that together they must count aloud from 1 up to the total number of participants – but there are a few rules: They must count in complete silence between numbers. No specific order – anyone can say the next number at any time. Each participant may say only one number per round. If two or more people speak at the same time, the group must start again from 1.
3. The goal is to reach the total number without restarting – it requires focus, teamwork, and non-verbal coordination.

Variation

Once the group succeeds, try the same activity with eyes closed for an extra challenge!

5. Main activity: Audience

Time

~15 - 20 min

Participants

Any (work in small groups)

Materials

Flipcharts or A3 paper, markers/pens

Steps:

1. Divide participants into small groups (3–5 people).
2. Explain that each group will describe their ideal audience for a story or project – in this case, youth aged 16–24.
3. On the flipchart, groups answer and discuss these guiding questions: What do they enjoy / what hobbies do they have? What goals do they have in life, studies, or career? What challenges or difficulties do they face? What do they value or enjoy most in stories? (e.g., humour, honesty, inspiration, emotions, realism, success) How can your story help or inspire them?
4. After the discussion, each group presents its audience profile to the other participants.

Tip

Encourage participants to give their audience a name, short description, or even a visual symbol – this helps make the audience more real and memorable.

6. Energiser: Change Places If...

Time

~10 - 15 min

Participants

5 or more

Materials

Chairs (one fewer than the number of participants)

Steps:

1. Arrange chairs in a circle so there is one fewer chair than the number of participants.
2. One participant stands in the middle of the circle.
3. The person in the middle says a sentence starting with "Change places if..." – for example: "Change places if you like to create stories." "Change places if you enjoy travelling." "Change places if you have a pet."
4. Everyone who relates to the statement must stand up and quickly find another chair.
5. The person left without a chair moves to the middle and says a new "Change places if..." sentence.
6. Encourage participants to avoid visible characteristics (e.g., "if you wear glasses") and instead focus on interests, feelings, or experiences.

Variation

To make it more thematic, use categories related to your workshop topic (e.g., creativity, teamwork, culture, or storytelling).

7. Activity: Storytelling

Time

~25 - 30 mins

Participants

Any (work in small groups)

Materials

3–5 picture cards per group, paper/flipchart, markers

Steps:

1. Divide participants into small groups (3–5 people).
2. Give each group 3–5 picture cards with different images.
3. Explain the task and instructions: Create a short story that includes all the cards. Keep in mind your ideal audience (youth 16–24 y.o.). Start with an unexpected or catchy sentence to grab attention (the hook). Add cultural elements – something from your traditions, local habits, or community life. Prepare to visualise your story (through acting, drawing, or symbols).
4. Allow 15–20 minutes for group work.
5. Each group presents its story to the others in 5 minutes.

Tip

Encourage creativity – stories can be funny, emotional, or inspiring, as long as they connect with the audience and include all the cards.

8. Activity: Reflection

Time

~10 - 15 mins

Steps:

1. Spread the metaphoric cards on the floor or table.

Participants

Any

Materials

Metaphoric (photo or symbol) cards

2. Ask each participant to choose one card that represents how they feel or what they take from the session.
3. Everyone sits in a circle.
4. One by one, participants briefly share: How I feel right now; What I enjoyed the most; What I am taking away (a thought, idea, feeling, or lesson).
5. End the activity by thanking everyone for their openness and participation.

Tip

This is a calm, connecting closing activity – keep the atmosphere relaxed, listen carefully, and avoid interruptions.



Digital Storytelling - Part Three

Tatics

1. Icebreaker Activity - “The Craziest Story Puzzle”

Time

~20 mins

Participants

3 groups of 3 people each

Materials

Puzzle pieces (with “Who”, “Where”, “When”, “Obstacle”, “Magic Object”), scissors, glue sticks, A4 sheets with story templates (lines for writing), pens, timer, flipchart

Steps:

1. The facilitator explains that each group will create the most creative, funny, and crazy digital story in the shortest possible time.
2. On the table, there are 5 sets of puzzle pieces, each labeled:
 - a. WHO (5 options – e.g., famous or imaginary characters)
 - b. WHERE (5 options – e.g., places or settings)
 - c. WHEN (5 options – e.g., time periods or years)
 - d. OBSTACLE (5 options – e.g., a problem or challenge)
 - e. MAGIC OBJECT (5 options – e.g., something unusual or powerful)
 - f. *Example: Jane Austen – New York – 2025 – A broken laptop – A quill pen*
3. The puzzle pieces are cut out and mixed together.
4. Each group randomly picks one piece from each category – one WHO, one WHERE,

one WHEN, one OBSTACLE, and one MAGIC OBJECT.

5. After all groups have drawn their five pieces, each group reads their combination out loud to everyone.
6. The facilitator sets a 30-second timer. Each group writes the first sentence of their story.
7. After 30 seconds, the timer rings. The facilitator announces, "Next sentence!" – and the groups continue writing.
8. This repeats five times, so that each group creates a short and complete story in five rounds.
9. At the end, groups share their stories aloud. The funniest or strangest one wins a small symbolic prize (like applause or stickers).
10. Optional: Groups can later transform their story into a digital version (video, photo, or audio) for the next activity.

2. Main Activity – “DIGITAL STORYTELLING FROM THE TERRITORY”

Time

~120 - 150 mins

Participants

3 groups of 3 people each

Steps:

1. The facilitator introduces the activity: Participants will create a digital story inspired by the local area, using their creativity and digital tools to connect storytelling with real places.
2. On the board, the facilitator presents three

Materials

Storyboard templates, pens, phones or cameras, laptops or tablets, internet connection, editing app (CapCut), projector for final sharing

local prompts: (for example)

- a. The Old Courthouse – the place where the group is hosted
 - b. The Percy French Statue – a symbolic landmark of the town
 - c. The town of Ballyjamesduff – its people, streets, or atmosphere
 - i. Participants can choose one of these prompts or pick any other element from the local environment that inspired them during their stay (a detail, a building, a story, or an emotion).
3. Each group researches basic information about their chosen topic (using the internet or local knowledge) to gather ideas for their story.
 4. Using the storyboard template, groups write down:
 - a. What happens in each scene
 - b. The characters involved
 - c. The main idea or message they want to express
 - d. Notes on visuals, dialogue, or sound
 - i. (Approx. 30 minutes for this step.)
 5. Once the storyboard is ready, groups go outside to film their story around the town or nearby area.
 6. They are encouraged to be creative with shots, camera angles, and acting, while respecting local spaces and people.
 7. (Approx. 30–40 minutes.)
 8. Back indoors, the facilitator shows a short

tutorial video on CapCut to introduce basic editing techniques (adding clips, transitions, text, and sound).

9. Groups then edit their videos using CapCut or another preferred app to create their final short digital story.

10. (Approx. 30–40 minutes.)

11. Once all videos are ready, groups present their stories to the others.



Ethics of the Story - Part Four

Teach Solais

1. Introduction – Framing the Session

Time

~10 - 15 mins

Materials

Slides, flipchart or
whiteboard, markers

Purpose

To open a conversation
about ethics in digital
storytelling, what it means,
why it matters, and how it
shapes the stories we tell

Steps:

1. Welcome participants and introduce the session focus: **Ethics of the Story**.
2. Explain that "ethics" here isn't about strict rules, but about care, responsibility, and awareness in how stories are told and shared.
3. Ask participants: What comes to mind when you hear "ethical storytelling"? Can stories harm, even when told with good intentions?
4. Note key words or ideas on the flipchart; these can be revisited at the end.

Tip:

Keep it grounded and open, encourage curiosity, not judgment. Let participants define "ethical" in their own words before introducing the main themes.

2. Exploring Common Ethical Themes

Time

~25 - 30 mins

Materials

Slides introducing five ethical themes

Purpose

To invite participants to think for themselves about what each theme might mean, before exploring the shared definitions together.

Steps:

1. Introduce that there are five key ethical themes in digital storytelling, each representing a different way to think about responsibility and care.
2. Display one slide at a time with only the theme title (e.g. Consent and Agency).
3. Ask the group to share what they think it means, encourage examples or gut reactions.
4. After a short discussion, reveal the definition on the next slide and briefly expand or clarify. (notes above for assistance)
5. Repeat for all five themes.
6. Reinforce that these aren't "rules," but ethical lenses that help storytellers make conscious choices.

Tip:

Hold back your definitions until the group has spoken first. Their interpretations often surface rich, personal insights, and make the later explanation more meaningful. Encourage conversation between participants. Their examples often make the ideas real.

3. Themes covered:

<p>Consent and Agency</p> <p>“Storytelling should never pressure someone to share more than they’re comfortable with. Agency means the storyteller feels in control of what they reveal, especially important when working with young people or sensitive topics.”</p>	<p>Representation and Voice</p> <p>“Ethical storytelling means avoiding stereotypes or speaking for others without permission. It values lived experience and authentic voice.”</p>	<p>Truth vs Creative License</p> <p>“Digital stories can include fictional elements, but it’s important to be transparent, especially if the audience might believe it’s a true story. Ask: Does the creative twist honour or distort the story?”</p>
<p>Cultural Context and Interpretation</p> <p>“What’s ethical in one culture might feel harmful or disrespectful in another. Storytellers should be aware of how culture shapes meaning, and check assumptions when working across communities.”</p>	<p>Safety, Anonymity, and Digital Permanence</p> <p>“Digital stories last. Even if deleted, they can be copied, downloaded, or shared without permission. It’s important to think long-term, especially when stories involve children, trauma, or personal identifiers. Using pseudonyms, changing details, or setting privacy boundaries can help protect storytellers and others in the story.”</p>	

4. Ethical Case Discussions

<p>Time</p> <p>~25 - 30 mins</p>	<p>Steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain that you'll look at five short ethical
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Materials

Slides with five short ethical case examples

Purpose

To explore real ethical dilemmas in storytelling and practice thinking through them together, recognising that there are often no easy answers.

case examples, one for each of the main themes.

2. Divide participants into small groups (3–5 people each).
3. Show the first slide. Ask groups to read the scenario and discuss the question shown.
4. Let them know they don't need to agree or reach a consensus; the value lies in hearing different viewpoints and seeing how people reason through complex choices.
5. After 5 minutes, invite groups to share their thoughts or reflections before moving to the next slide.
6. Continue this rhythm for all five examples.

Tip:

Keep the tone exploratory. There isn't one right answer; the aim is to listen, notice complexity, and build empathy. Remember that disagreement can be productive; ethical storytelling often lives in grey areas. It's about awareness, not perfection.

5. PR Ethics Exercise – Rewrite the Narrative

Time

~25 - 30 mins

Materials

Steps:

1. Divide participants into small "communications teams."
2. Explain that each group will act as a PR team responding to one of the Daily Digital

"Daily Digital Story"
scenario sheets (included
at the end of this lesson
plan for printing), paper,
pens

Purpose

To practice ethical
reframing – how language
shapes meaning and how
adding context can
change a story's impact.

Story headlines.

3. Give each group one printed scenario sheet. Their task: Rewrite the headline to shift tone or offer a new perspective. Draft a short public statement that reframes the story, not by denying what happened, but by adding compassion, context, or accountability.
4. After 10–15 minutes, groups share their rewritten headlines and statements.
5. Facilitate a brief discussion after each: What effect did the changes have? How did tone alter audience perception? Where's the balance between empathy and responsibility?

Tip:

Keep it playful but thoughtful. The aim is to explore how perspective and wording can change a story's tone, to notice how "spin" works, and to determine what feels fair or not.

6. Breakout Activity – Write & Film an Ethical Scene

Time

~45 - 60 mins

Materials

Two hats or bowls: one filled with slips of paper for Scene Prompts; one

Steps:

1. Divide participants into small groups of 3–5.
2. Explain that there are two hats (or bowls), one containing the scene prompts, the other the ethical considerations.
3. Each group draws one slip from each hat, creating a unique pairing to base their

filled with slips for Ethical Considerations. Phones or cameras for filming. Paper and pens for planning.

Purpose

To combine storytelling and ethics in practice, creating short filmed scenes that explore moral or emotional tension.

story on.

4. Give groups 15–20 minutes to plan and write a short 1–3-minute scene based on their drawing.
5. Ask them to film the scene, following the basic video guidelines: One wide shot showing both characters; One close-up of each character; One moment of action from two angles; Clear, audible dialogue; A beginning, middle, and end, something should shift or be revealed.
6. Once all groups have finished, gather to screen and discuss their scenes.

Tip:

Keep the mood creative and curious. The aim is to explore how ethical choices and perspectives shape a story, not to get it "right."

Scene Prompts:

- The Confession
- The Job Interview
- The Favour
- The Confrontation

Ethical Considerations:

- Consent and Agency
- Representation and Voice
- Truth vs Creative License
- Cultural Context and Interpretation
- Safety, Anonymity, and Digital Permanence

7. Group Screening & Reflection – Ethical Movie Festival

Time

~ 20 - 30 mins

Materials

Projector or screen,
speakers, and space for
group discussion

Purpose

To close the session,
watch each group's short
scene, reflect on ethical
insights, and connect the
learning back to real-world
storytelling.

Steps:

1. Gather everyone together and explain that you'll be hosting a mini Ethical Movie Festival.
2. Invite groups to introduce their short film before the screening, with just a sentence or two about their scene prompt and ethical considerations.
3. Play the film for the group.
4. After each screening, hold a short Q&A (2–3 minutes) where the group reflects briefly on: Did anything unexpected happen while filming or planning; What they found most challenging or interesting in creating it.
5. Continue until all groups have shared.
6. Close the session with a short open group reflection: What surprised or stayed with you today? How might these questions influence the stories you tell or share in future?

Tip:

Keep the atmosphere light, curious, and respectful. Celebrate creativity and openness; the goal is reflection, not critique.



Scenario sheet for PR Ethics Exercise – Rewrite the Narrative available on the next pages for printing.



Daily Digital Story

BREAKING NEWS

Arts Officer Ends Youth Poetry Night Mid-Performance

Mara Doyle, a local arts officer, stopped a teen open mic night halfway through after several performers shared poetry about racism, class inequality, and political frustration.

Attendees accused her of censorship after she reportedly said, “This isn’t the place for personal agendas — it’s meant to be about art.”

Several young people left the venue visibly upset.



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Daily Digital Story

BREAKING NEWS

Festival Director Caught Yelling at Volunteer

A short video clip from the Midsummer Street Festival shows director Alan Roche shouting at a volunteer: “Do I have to do everything myself?”

The volunteer walks away in tears. The video has been widely shared on social media, with many calling Alan’s behaviour unprofessional and demanding accountability.



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Daily Digital Story

BREAKING NEWS

Councillor Walks Out of Housing Protest Meeting

During a heated town hall protest about housing evictions, Councillor Naomi Byrne was seen leaving the room while saying: "I didn't come here to be shouted at. Not my problem."

Local activists accused her of being dismissive and unwilling to engage with urgent community concerns.



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Daily Digital Story

BREAKING NEWS

Community Worker Criticised for Naming Grieving Family in Funding Bid

David Osei, founder of a neighbourhood support project, came under fire after a grant application was leaked. It described a recent local tragedy involving a bereaved family — who say they weren't told their story would be used.

Critics have accused him of using grief to boost his chances of securing funding. David says his intention was “to show the real challenges our community faces.”



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