

UNLesson Plan

Story Planet describes their workshops as a place to formally understand the informal routes storytelling can take. For this reason, they have introduced Once Upon A Time Warp to the concept of an un-lesson plan”. In this un-lesson, we hope an **un**learning will be accomplished through the rewriting of our own narratives surrounding storytelling. In the examples provided by Story Planet (to 3R, for cross-reference), we quickly came to learn of the significance of openness and flexibility. The major goal is to not teach children in grades 3-7 non-linearity, but to provide them the space in which they can move away from the linearity expected of them. There is an inherent diversity that exists in the way we tell stories and in the activities I propose below, we might begin to naturally explore conceptualizations of non-colonialism and non-linearity.

A Puzzling Story

(Approximately 1 hour)

- A look into how many parts create a whole (collaborative storytelling)

Goal:

To collaboratively produce a story within the workshop setting making way for the practice of skills regarding story generation.

Essential Questions:

How can stories evolve with the inclusion of multiple voices?

Necessary Materials:

- Bristol board and scissors OR premade blank puzzles (https://www.amazon.ca/Inovart-Puzzle-28-Piece-Puzzles-Package/dp/B00598K8VE/ref=sr_1_6?dchild=1&keywords=blank+puzzle+pieces&qid=1619120101&sr=8-6)
- Any writing/drawing materials

Guidance and Expected Outcomes:

- Prior to workshops, facilitators should prepare blank puzzle pieces that can be separated
 - They can be premade (link shared above) OR manually cut out of bristol board
 - If online, workshop participants can be sent a worksheet with a single blank puzzle piece (example provided below)
- Facilitators should provide a prompt that enables storytellers to use their imagination in story building with a grounded theme
 - Example: Write a story that weaves together the lives of many through their connection to a particular tree
 - By using something like this, storytellers will not only tell the story of a non-human protagonist, but explore relationships from a second point-of-view

- This inevitably affects how the story is perceived by its writers and the audience
- The introduction of numerous characters “unlimits” the story (anyone can create a new piece to the puzzle)
- To encourage story development, facilitators should ask guiding questions
 - Who has the relationship with the tree? Are they human?
 - When did this relationship develop?
 - What does the tree mean to this character? Why?
- Once numerous puzzle pieces are created, storytellers can then begin to weave together the life of this tree (or any other “big picture” facilitators/storytellers would like to create)
- Through discussion and as one would anticipate, a larger story begins to unfold through imagery, text, and verbal exchange
- Workshop participants can even be asked to interrogate how their individual pieces interconnect with others (outside of the overarching theme)

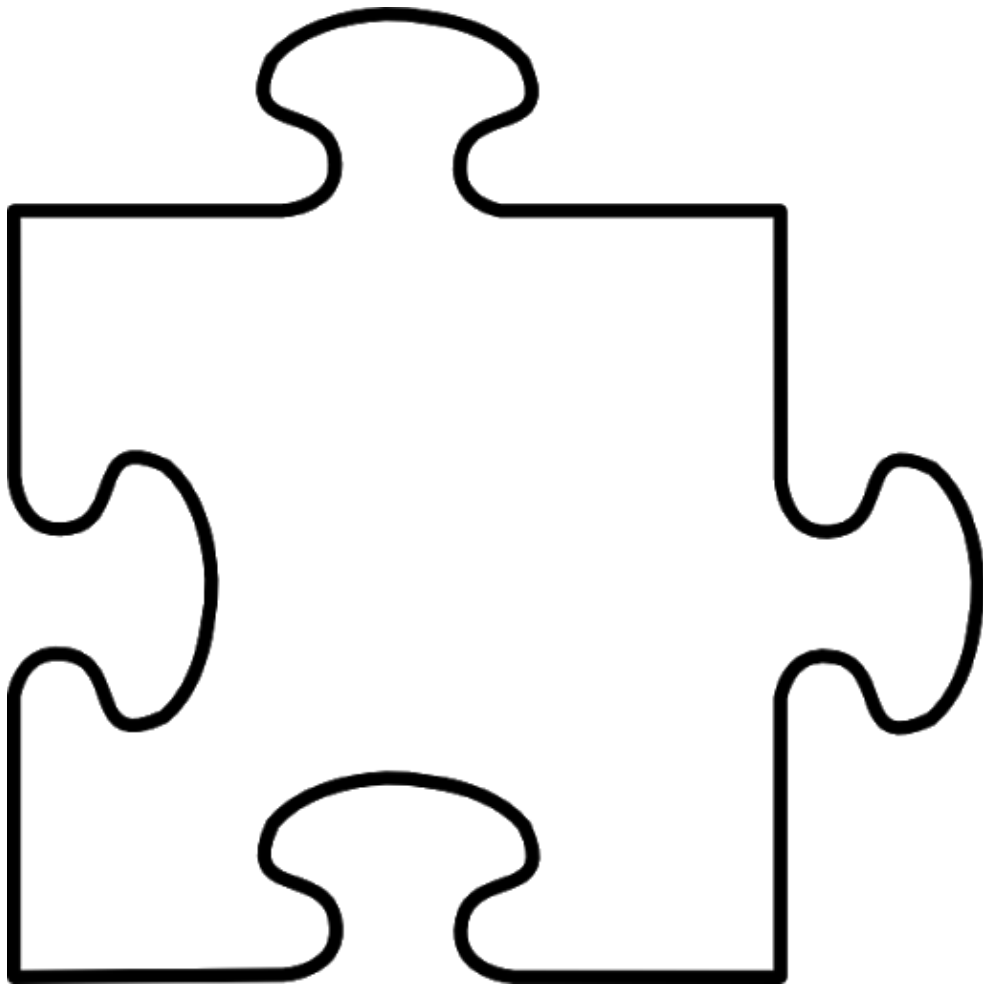
WORKSHEET EXAMPLE below (to be made downloadable/printable if online)
 Feel free to edit in the case of necessary specificity. If the where is established prior to the activity, like in the tree example, storytellers will not have to answer that question.
 Guiding questions do not have to be the ‘who, when, how, and why’ provided.

A puzzling story

You add an important piece to the puzzle

Name: _____

Prompt: Write a story that weaves together the lives of many through their connection to a particular tree.



Guiding Questions

Who?	Tells us who the storytellers would like to introduce. Exp. Amira and Adam, an older married couple, visit the tree regularly.
When?	Tells us when the character(s) entered the story. Exp. This started when they were much younger.

How?	Tells us how this introduction came about and possibly, what came out of it. Exp. Amira was sitting under the tree when Adam accidentally knocked over her water bottle while he was playing with his soccer ball.
Why?	Addresses what is particularly meaningful about this Exp. The tree has become a memento of their union- it grew as they grew.

2. RE-Call (Approximately 25-35 minutes)

- Insight: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=vuBqm9Oooec>
(exclusively for educator's reference because of profanity use)
- Comedian Tom Segura explores the nonlinearity children's storytelling naturally takes on by calling them "the worst storytellers"
 - This comically speaks to the underlying expectation of conformity, yet exposes something we do through something as simple as recall

Goal:

In RE-Call, storytellers will be encouraged to build on their skills of oral communication and verbal comprehension.

Essential Question:

How do we generate meaning through the knowledge we already possess?

Necessary Materials:

- Flash cards
- Writing utensils

Guidance and Expected Outcomes:

- Prior to workshops, facilitators should have materials prepared (4 cards per storyteller; writing utensils like pencils, erasers, pencil crayons, markers etc.)
- Workshop facilitators to pose a question that calls for participants to share their own memories
 - Some example questions include: What was your best/favourite day?, How did you spend your last birthday?, What's your favourite movie and why? (plot exploration)
- Since this is a more casual activity, materials can be left blank and storytellers will be instructed on what to do with each card
 - This instruction can happen verbally, but for accessibility, it can also be written/typed out
- On the four cards, storytellers will answer these main "W" questions with the use of pictures and/or words:
 - What? (1)
 - When? (2)
 - Where? (3)
 - Why? (4)

EXAMPLE

1. The best day was when my family adopted our cat, Lucia.	2. I was ____ years old.
3. We got Lucia at a local shelter.	4. I love Lucia more than anything.

- The 5 W's method helps you identify facets of what storytellers would like to share
 - It naturally takes on the burden of addressing factors necessary to *basic* storytelling
- Without prescribing expectations of linearity, storytellers will begin storytelling in a way that is comfortable for them
- By eliminating the imposition of developmental concern (ie. is the story reflective of an understanding expected within the classroom setting/curriculum?), storytellers can express themselves without the anxieties that may accompany formal assessment (use of grade qualifiers and rubrics)

Quick Suggestions

Improv games that encourage collaboration and spur of the moment input that allow workshop participants to generate their own stories alongside each other. This can be done as an introduction or conclusion during workshops, or even as an icebreaker.

<https://www.theatrefolk.com/blog/improv-games-for-collaboration/>