

24

Telling personal stories

Goal

By telling personal stories in a moderated educational context, the students learn to use their first language for the presentation of their experiences and for the expression of their feelings as well. At the same time, they hone their communicatively relevant competencies like listening comprehension, follow-up questions, and mutual references. Last but not least, telling personal stories furthers important social aspects, such as empathy and mutual understanding.

2nd–9th grade

10–30 minutes



Materials:
Possibly conversation cards
(see examples)

Hints:

- We are not going to focus on uncontrolled, spontaneous telling of personal adventures and experiences, etc. here, as this should have its place in school anyway. This can occur in directed situations, such as the storytelling circle (see #17) or also totally unplanned, if a problem, an important experience, or a happy event will need to be discussed.
- No child should be pressured to reveal personal feelings, adventures or experiences. Part of the nature and important characteristic of telling personal stories is its voluntariness. However, if a child remains silent for a longer period of time, the instructor should be concerned about the reasons and seek to remedy the situation.

Procedure:

- As an introductory impulse for discussion situations that involve personal thoughts, experiences and feelings, the instructor may hand out conversation cards or write a question on the board, which is then discussed.
Example:



- A suggestion from the students can serve equally well as an introductory impulse for the conversation.
- Pictures or photographs can also be very good prompts for personal conversations.
- It is also a good idea to collect suggestions (possibly anonymous ones) in an envelope as a prompt for personal conversation rounds.



- Before the discussions, students should be afforded a few minutes to collect their thoughts and reflections, as well as to note possible language problems. See also #10 (How to prepare for a conversation).
- Perhaps a short practice round is needed before the discussion, in order to:
 1. clarify language questions (e. g. terms in the first language),
 2. review sentence building blocks or language means, suggested by the instructor, which could be especially useful (phrases, such as “In my opinion ...”, “I find rather that ...”) and
 3. a reminder of important conversation rules, e. g. “I listen attentively”, “No one will be laughed at because of his/her opinion”, “I will not interrupt anyone” etc. (see #9).
- The discussion of the question can first occur in pairs or also directly involve a larger group (group level or entire class).

25 Narrating creatively

Goal

Surveys and interviews are forms of information acquisition that are also highly valuable for HLT. They lead to authentic statements and “data”; the quality of which, however, depends strongly on the nature of information gathering. It is therefore well worthwhile to carefully consider the questions. In doing so, the students also learn to apply their first language in a new context and in a differentiated and reflective manner.

3rd–9th grade

20–40 minutes



Materials:
possibly choice of texts for the students
(Fairy tales, fables, stories...).

Procedure:

- As a possible introduction, the instructor tells a story, e. g. a fairy tale, a legend or another (not very long) story from the students’ heritage culture and literature. The instructor endeavors to create a vivid and lively presentation of the text, observing the tips for a lively presentation, suggested in #22.
- The students are then instructed to practice presenting a story in a similar fashion, either individually or in small groups. The instructor distributes appropriate texts (shorter ones for the weaker students and longer ones for the more advanced students).
- The most important criteria for a lively and vivid narration are gathered and reviewed one more time (see tips in #22); the students should adhere to them.
- The students practice to present their narration (for procedures, see #22).
- The individual narrations are then presented to the class as a whole.
- The exercise concludes with criteria-oriented discussion, as described in #22.

