

Breaking Societal Issues down into sub-issues using storytelling

This working method is used both for small groups and whole groups together. During this working method students will connect a societal issue to their own lives, listen for and identify smaller sub-issues of the larger societal issue, they will work together and listen to one another. In addition to this principle, this activity supports Learning Through Dialogue and Interaction and Learning Through Thinking.

Expected outcome(s) – students will:

- ✓ Be able to explain how their personal story connects to a societal issue.
- ✓ Be able to identify smaller sub-issues within a larger societal issue.
- ✓ Be able to work together in small groups.
- ✓ Be able to demonstrate active listening behaviours.
- ✓ Recognize societal issues in daily life.
- ✓ Be able to categorize/group ideas.

Timing

The minimum amount of time you should plan for this method is **60** minutes.

Material

You can work offline or use blended learning tools.

Offline	Blended
<p>Let your students write their choice on a ballot or raise their hand.</p>	<p>Use a digital voting tool that's easy and quick to vote. Create an account to one of the following tools:</p> <p>Mentimeter: create a presentation with two questions (for free) with 'multiple choice'.</p> <p>Kahoot: create a Kahoot quiz with limited of four choices for your students.</p> <p>Plickers: print the Plicker cards and give your students a Plicker card to vote.</p> <p>→ Print out the amount of Plickers cards needed, one for each student.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → You need a tablet for each student/pair of students for the Padlet exercise. → You need a smartphone to scan the answers of the student with Plickers app. <p>Share the link of the digital tool with your students, so they can get access on their device.</p> <p>More info on the tools?</p>
<p>Offline</p>	<p>Blended</p>
<p>three large papers</p>	<p>Create three columns on a digital collaborating tool:</p> <p>Google Jamboard: create one frame with the three categories or create three frames, one for each category.</p> <p>Miro: create an overview of the three categories.</p> <p>Padlet: create a Padlet in column style with three columns for each category.</p> <p>Put digital post-its ready with different colours. Assign a colour to each group.</p> <p>Share the link or QR-code of the digital tool with your students, so they can get access on their device.</p> <p>More info on the tools?</p>

Prepare yourself

You will need:

- A screen to show the overview to the students.
- A laptop, tablet for each small group of students.



Create offline or digital collaboration spaces with Google Jamboard, Miro or Padlet (step 3 and 4):

1. **Societal issues:** at the top it names the societal issue everyone will be discussing; below are columns for virtual or real sticky notes that the students can write on.
2. **Categorise:** a second space to categorize/group the ideas from the first space.
3. **Questions:** a third space for each group to take one category and brainstorm questions they need to explore to understand the issue better.

Societal issue	Categorise	Questions



Plickers

- Give each student/pair or group of students a laptop/tablet.
- Prepare your Mentimeter or Kahoot quiz for the voting if every student has a laptop.
- Not enough tablets/laptops for everyone? Use Plickers.
 - ❑ Create a new Plickers set.
 - ❑ Hand out the Plickers cards to your students for the voting.
 - ❑ Add your choices of societal issues.
 - ❑ Make sure the questions are set from 'graded' to 'survey'.
 - ❑ Let your students put their Plickers card in the air with their answer on top.
 - ❑ Scan the results with your Plickers app.

More information on [Plickers?](#)

Step-by-step

Begin by deciding on a societal issue to use as the anchor for this activity. We suggest you invite the students to vote on an issue from the Venn diagram exercise from the another working method. Use a Mentimeter or Kahoot. Not a device for everyone? Use Plickers.



1. Input

Present the societal issue and invite the students to think about a time when they observed or experienced that issue/problem.

Ask the student to think carefully about what that observation or experience was. Let them know that soon, in small groups, they will be sharing their story. Be ready to offer them a personal example from your own life to share.

2. Small Group Story Telling & Listening

Split the students into small groups of an average of 4 students. Explain the instructions: each student will have 2 minutes to tell his/her story. When one student is speaking, everyone else is listening. Everyone gets a turn to speak.



*Keep time for the students to keep them moving. Use a public timer.

3. Collecting ideas from the stories

Now, explain to the students that they will stay in their groups and make a list of smaller issues/ideas that came from their stories on the first column.



Each group gets a device. Assign each group a colour and let them use the corresponding coloured post-its. In their group, they write their issues/ideas on the Miro board/Google Jamboard/Padlet.

Example: if the issue was homelessness, a child could have told a story about putting money in a jar for a person they saw on the street and they may have shared how it made them feel.

The smaller issues that could come out of that story are where do homeless people sleep, giving charity to a person, feeling sad, or worried, or even scared when walking by someone who is homeless.

Tip

This can be a difficult exercise for younger students. Consider offering them a paper with a blank chart with the following headings instead of brainstorming questions: “the stories made me feel, “the stories made me wonder about, “the stories made me think about”.

4. Sharing and Categorizing issues



Bring the students back together into a large group. Show the digital collaboration board on the screen. Delete the repeated answers from the groups. As a group, work to categorize the issues together in the second column.

With our homelessness example some large categories may be healthcare, access to bathrooms, access to food, access to clean clothes, dental care, mental health, charity to individuals, charity to organizations, affordable housing, etc.

Guide the students to help them see that as a class you have gone through a process of looking at one large issue, ex. Homelessness and can now see all the different issues that are inside of that one big issue.

This is a perfectly good place to end the exercise (don't forget the reflection in #5). If you are interested in beginning the steps toward a deeper exploration, consider beginning with the next step.

5. Exploring Next Steps



Back in their small groups, ask each group to choose one category from the board on the device. Then in the third column, ask the students to brainstorm as many questions as they can about what they would need to and want to know about the issue to understand it better.

From this step you could take your class in many directions:

1. You could have them decide about information they want to gather and think about the next steps: How will they begin to answer the questions they listed?
2. You could connect the information they need to gather to a current lesson or unit you are teaching, such as in math. For example, maybe the students are learning about surveying, or presenting data. The students could gather data about the issue and practice their data and graphing skills to present it to others.
3. You could develop a small group or whole group project to research and better understand an issue and present it to the class, other classrooms, their families.
4. You could develop a project that works all the way toward thinking about and presenting steps to take to address the problem.
5. Be creative!

6. Reflection

Content: What did I learn about the issue from listening to other people's stories?

Process: How did listening to other people's stories help me think about this issue? How did it feel for me to tell a story about the issue?

7. Bringing it home

Have the students to ask someone at home to tell them a personal story about the issue. The next day they can share the stories with the class.

