Training Package Vol 2

CREATIVE THINKING
IN LITERACY & LANGUAGE SKILLS
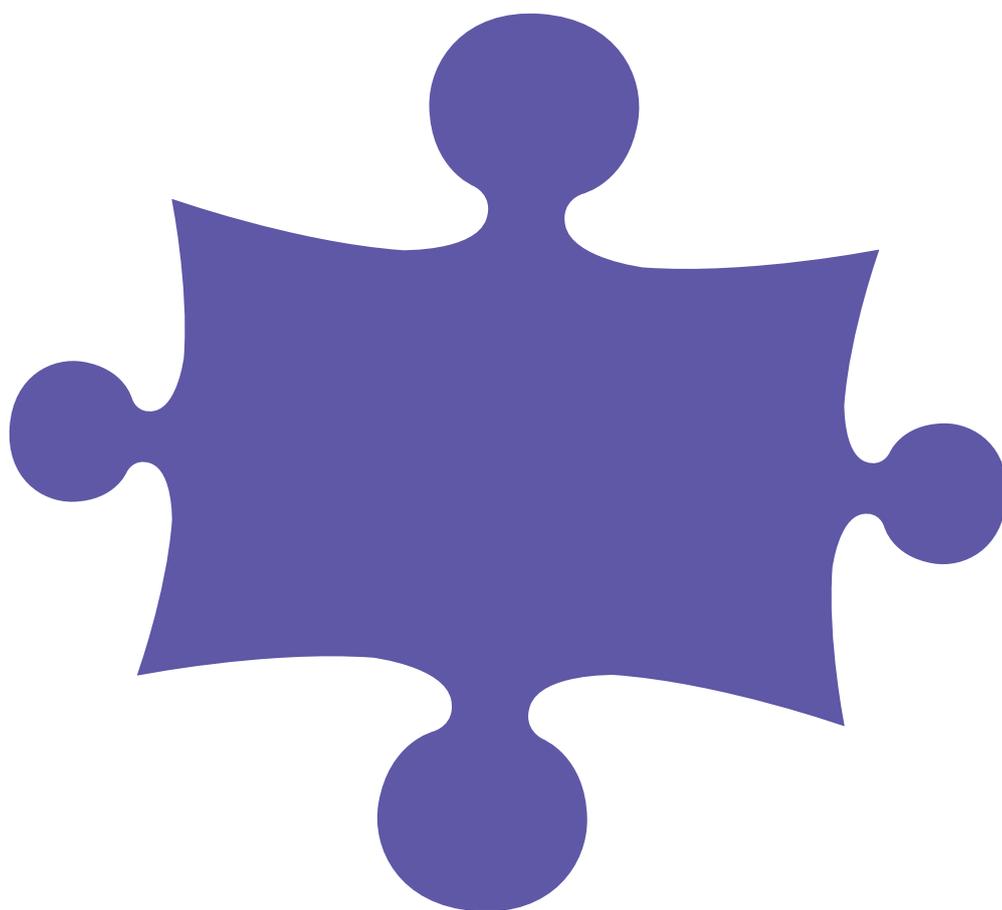
Media

Contents

About this training package

Training package activities:

About this Training Package

'Learning by doing' is a principle of effective learning that is as true in the learning of creative thinking as it is in any other subject.

While we may read the innumerable articles and web pages dedicated to the practice of creative thinking, it is not until we have sat down and confronted a problem, equipped with our various creative thinking tools, that we will actually learn how to apply the various techniques to generate creative outputs.

The accompanying Training Guidelines provide step-by-step instructions to enable learners to understand the basics for themselves OR for trainers / teachers to facilitate training sessions with the same objective.

The Training Guidelines are recommended as a starting point, as they provide a high degree of contextual information in support of the various creative thinking methods. However, for those who wish to either extend the teaching of the Training Guidelines through a series of semi-prescriptive activities, or for those who wish to start their creative thinking learning journey at the coal face (where the real work happens), this Training Package provides the support and tools required to do so.

Thematic topics

The training guidelines have been developed within four thematic topic areas.

- **Art & Design (Volume 1)**
- **Media (Volume 2)**
- **Narrative (Volume 3)**
- **Responsive learning (Volume 4)**

These topic areas are deemed to be appropriate to a wide range of foreign language and literacy learning situations, with readily available resources and extensive opportunities for on going development.

Each thematic topic activity set is contained in its own volume.

Activities

The training package contains a total of forty ready-to-use activities; ten activities per topic area.

Each activity has a title and activity number, and includes information relating to the primary creative thinking method exploited by the activity, as well as the various aspects of language and literacy learning that it addresses.

In addition to the main creative thinking inspired activity, there is often guidance on developing extended activities for learners. In most cases these activities demand higher levels of competency / understanding or require greater learner autonomy. They should be considered as staring points from which you are encouraged to develop your own context-relevant activities.

Background information is often included in the form of guidelines, to ensure that all trainers / teachers are able to deliver each activity with confidence.

Creative Thinking methods

The primary creative thinking method employed in each activity is described with sufficient detail to facilitate that activity.

While couched within a specific activity, you should note each underlying methodology for use within your own resources, keeping in mind that the various creative thinking methods are designed to be flexible and interchangeable. Re-combining methods to achieve effective creative thinking 'routines' can be very rewarding, as it demonstrates a developed working understanding of the field.

For further explanations of any creative thinking method you are advised to make reference to the accompanying Training Guidelines.

Game show

Thematic topic	Media
Creative thinking method	Word association
Primary skills addressed	Speaking, listening
Secondary skills addressed	Writing, reading
Resources required	None

Overview:

The 'game show' format was first popularized on radio, but since then it has had a much bigger impact on TV, with audiences being able to see the immediate reactions of players performing, often under pressure. While many game shows offer prizes, it is actually the participation of other humans that captures the imagination of viewers.

It is a fairly easy task to set up a game show situation within a classroom, by rearranging desks or tables and choosing game players from your learner group.

The game designed for this activity is a word association game, and as such it relies on this effective creative thinking technique. However, by engaging learners in the construction of the game show, the formal creative thinking technique of brainstorming can also be employed.

11

Background information: Brainstorming guidelines

While brainstorming is one of the most commonly used creative thinking approaches, it is often conducted in an ad-hoc or organic fashion. While acting in an ad-hoc or organic way can be an asset in creative thinking, it is worth following some formal guidelines when brainstorming.

• Define the problem / question / objective etc. In this example the problem of generating challenging word or phrasal concepts.

• Set a time limit for the session (or round). One to two minutes should be sufficient, though if it is the first time you have used formal brainstorming with learners, you may wish to increase the time slightly. Try to find a time that allows the quota to be met.

• Decide on a quota that you feel you can meet and that will be challenging. A quota of between five and ten ideas would work well for this problem.

• Generate and record ideas until you meet your quota (or the time runs out) - don't be tempted to judge and reject ideas as they emerge.

• Evaluate ideas at the end of the session or round, recognising the value of 'initial ideas' that could be developed into viable solutions with a little more focused thought.

This is an important stage as some ideas may sound a little crazy to start with, but could have hidden potential.

Activity:

Game show format: The game format for this activity is fairly simple. It requires the formation of two teams, each with two players. During the game the two teams will play against each other and attempt to score the maximum number of points. The game consists of three rounds of competition.

A 'Game show host' is elected from the learner group. This person will manage the proceedings of the game.

A timer is set for 30 seconds, which is the time allowed for each team to answer in each round. Each team takes it in turns to provide their responses.

The team that is selected to start is presented with a word or phrase, representing a particular concept. At this moment the 30 second timer begins to count down. This word or phrase can be held on a card by a 'TV presenter' or projected on to a screen, ensuring all players and the audience can see it.

The first player in the first team calls out a word associated with the concept that is represented. For example, the concept of 'a day at the beach' may illicit the response 'sun bathing'. The second player in the team has to then call out another association with the concept (beach holiday in this example), lets assume they call out 'ice cream', then the turn goes back to the first player. This turn taking of the two team members continues until the 30 second time limit is over.

The number of responses (associations) is recorded during the 30 seconds. If an answer is duplicated, then no point is awarded and the point awarded for the original response is deducted. The opposing team can, at the end of the 30 seconds, challenge any answers that have been given, based on their actual association to the original concept. As the teacher / facilitator, you can decide if an association is reasonable or you can ask the audience to vote.

Game show preparation: While the word association game can be fun for learners, the real value is in the preparation of the word/phrase concepts and the associated questions.

Prior to the game being played, the class should be divided into two groups. Each group is tasked with conceiving the concepts for use in the game, and formulating the associated questions.

To develop the word/phrase concepts, the learners should engage in a formal brainstorming process that conforms to the process illustrated below (quota of between 8 and 10). Within this task learners may wish to consider concepts with less obvious associations than a 'day at the beach', though to introduce the game show format you may provide a 'dry run' with this type of simple example.

The brainstorming process should be repeated once the three concepts have been selected, in order to determine the three questions that relate to each concept (Quota of between 4 and 5 per question). The questions should be based on easily researchable information, a Google search for example, or based on things that your learners know about the concept.

Extended activities:

Once this game show format is known to your learners, it can be used in a slightly different way, which is to explore concepts relating to other topics that are being studied. In such a case, you as the teacher can determine the word concepts to be presented and then use the format to engage learners in associative thinking. This can be a great way to generate ideas on a wide range of topics and concepts relating to learning.

CREATIVE THINKING
IN LITERACY & LANGUAGE SKILLS

TV branding

Thematic topic	Media
Creative thinking method	Oblique thinking
Primary skills addressed	Speaking, writing
Secondary skills addressed	Listening
Resources required	None

Overview:

In recent years there has been an explosion in the number of TV channels. The concept of a channel has transcended the TV and now exists online on services such as YouTube, Vimeo and others.

For a new TV channel, on TV or online, it can be difficult to gain recognition. The visual identity that represents the channel is one of the key elements that can make or break a channel. In the early 1980s, MTV made ground-breaking advances in the construction and evolution of channel branding, seemingly able to cut through all of the other channels that were competing for attention at that time.

This activity is based on the conception of a TV channel identity, for a channel that will serve the tastes and viewing habits of your learner audience. In this way, the activity can be tailored to a wide range of learner groups.

The activity demands an element of formal brainstorming in the formation of the channel name, though when considering the visual elements of the activity, the more sophisticated technique of subject specific oblique thinking strategies is employed.

Background information: Creating a TV channel identity

Creating a TV channel visual identity is not a particularly simple task, as the visual design often needs to be flexible to work across a wide range of media, including a TV screen. Typically, it will also be used on a web site, in print advertising, on garments such as t-shirts, posters and other merchandise. It may be a static design or it may need to be animated within certain contexts.

Despite this complexity, there are some constants in terms of design guidelines that can be usefully applied to the task. When beginning this activity with your learners the following essential information should be sought:

• Be absolutely clear about who the target audience for the TV channel is, with as much specific information as possible.

• Determine what type of programming will be shown on the TV channel.

• Consider which advertisers are most likely to buy advertising time on this channel. This may be quite general in description, listing sectors rather than individual companies.

• List the main values of the channel, which may consist of a set of adjectives.

• Consider which channels that you consider direct competition for your new channel.

All of these elements can be explored with your learners via a formal brainstorming session, making reference to the brainstorming guidelines below. You should spend around 30 minutes exploring and determining this essential information.

Activity:

TV channel name: The initial design activity is to arrive at a name for the channel, describing the visual elements that will comprise the visual identity for the channel.

Once all of the essential information (target audience, indicative programming, primary advertisers, channel values and competition) is known, a creative brainstorming session should be undertaken by learners, in groups of between 3 and 5 learners. Each group should set a minimum quota of 10 names for this process. Once a list of names has been generated and the brainstorming session ceases, each name should be evaluated against the essential information of the channel. Allow and encourage contributors to argue for their own choices, based on suitability against the key information. This type of reasoned debate is an important aspect of the learning in this activity.

At this stage you can either allow each sub group to select their 'best' name and continue with the activity, or you may wish to compare the best name from each group to arrive at a class consensus for the channel name.

Visual design: Before commencing the visual design stage, it may be worth showing a small number of examples of TV channel visual identity designs.

When deciding on the visual elements that support the visual identity, you will use a small set of oblique thinking suggestions, which are specifically related to visual design.

With these visual cues, written or printed on small cards, present one card to each sub group and ask them to consider the visual design of the channel identity, in association with the 'suggestion' that is on the card. These suggestions may be ambiguous and in such cases it is up to the individual sub groups to make their own interpretation. It is this element of individual interpretation that makes oblique thinking strategies so powerful. The general evidence suggests that each individual will have a different idea as a result of each oblique thinking card.

The oblique thinking strategy cues included below are tailored towards visual design outputs. As the facilitator of the activity, feel free to add to or adapt this list.

- Collage of styles
- Simplify the main elements
- Think in three dimensions
- Repetition is always an option
- Emphasise the lettering
- Hand made is best
- Inside out or upside down, or both
- Rhythm and blues, and all the other colours
- How does it fold up?
- Emotions in motion
- Reflect on your other ideas

Each sub group should engage in a brainstorming session, with a quota for the minimum number of ideas, using the oblique thinking cue to generate visual design ideas.

Encourage learners to draw as well as write, though ultimately the goal is to arrive at a description of a visual design solution for the TV channel. An evaluation of the generated idea should take place as a discussion process, though reference should be made to the essential information generated earlier. Effectively this becomes the criteria by which to judge ideas.

Once each sub group has arrived at their 'best' visual design solution, they should write a proposal for the design, in a style that could be presented or e-mailed to the management team at the TV channel. The communication should not only describe the visual identity concept, but should also justify all of the design elements (including channel name) based on what the visual identity is aiming to communicate about the channel.

The written proposals should be read out to the larger class to receive feedback, as the conclusion to the activity. During this presentation each sub group should declare the oblique thinking cue they received, explaining how it influenced their design process.

CREATIVE THINKING
IN LITERACY & LANGUAGE SKILLS

Rap song

Thematic topic	Media
Creative thinking method	Challenge assumptions
Primary skills addressed	Speaking, writing
Secondary skills addressed	Listening
Resources required	Advertising imagery

Overview:

Most people alive today have grown up with different forms of advertising around them, whether that has been print, screen or audio advertising. While strict guidelines exist in most countries to ensure that advertisers do not mislead their audience with false statements or ambiguous messages, the advertising world has become very good at employing a wide range of suggestive signifiers to make audiences think more in one way than another.

For example, a neutral product can be portrayed as more 'romantic' by adding a certain musical soundtrack, placing it in a conventionally romantic setting (such as Venice) or including object signifiers such as roses or love hearts, maybe adding the colour red too. While these techniques do not contravene advertising guidelines, they do require us to question the true value of what is being advertised, so that our expectations are realistic. The advertiser is essentially relying on the audience to make certain assumptions based on the signifiers presented.

In this case we will use the medium of rap to 'expose' the language of adverts to be something other than objective facts, using the challenging assumptions technique.

Background information: Writing a rap song

Writing rap songs doesn't require a technical musical structure or a well tuned voice, more often it's about the language and words used. However, despite this lower level of access to musical composition, there are still some good practice guidelines that can be followed to ensure credible results.

•   Select a subject to rap about and decide what your point of view on this subject actually is. Effectively decide what it is you want to say about the subject.

•   As rap relies heavily on rhyming words you should think about your rhyming structure. Most rhymes in rap songs are 'end rhymes', with words / syllables at the end of discrete lines rhyming with others. You can also include 'multiple-syllable rhymes (multis)', though harder to find these will be more satisfying. 'Internal rhymes' are where words within lines, rather than at the end, rhyme with one another.

•   Once a subject has been decided, engage in a number of word association activities, with both rhyming and non-rhyming words. Keep written records of the results as a resource to select from at a later stage.

•   The basic structure or rap songs include an intro (4 – 8 bars), a hook or chorus, which is the memorable and often repeated part of a song, two or more verses (16 – 32 bars), and an outro which may be similar to the intro. Listen to some rap songs to identify these various elements.

•   Within rap you can, and perhaps should, use conventional literary devices such as: metaphor, simile, hyperbole, irony, alliteration etc. Other types of creative word play are encouraged.

•   Test your rap regularly and never resist the need to edit and re-test, creating rap songs is an active and often experimental process, with many rap songs being the result of an evolutionary process.

Activity:

Any kind of advertising (print, billboards, magazines, radio, TV etc.) could be used as a starting point for this activity, though to begin with a static form of advertising such as magazine, poster or billboard, may provide a more manageable challenge.

You can select a number of adverts yourself and bring them to your lesson, though you only need one advertising example. In making selections, look for advertising that seems to be more suggestive of certain lifestyles, aspirations or emotional cues; adverts that seem to 'make' you feel something.

The first stage of the activity is to show the advert to the class, inviting comments about what your learners think the advert is saying to its audience. You may also attempt to determine the target audience that the advertisement is aimed at, as this can provide a more meaningful and deeper understanding. Once you have a number of ideas listed on a flip chart or board (visible to the learners), ask your learners to think hard about how the advert has constructed this meaning, including what techniques or signifiers have been used to make the audience assume certain things. Ask your learners to write these ideas down before sharing them with the class.

You now have some content to begin the writing of your rap songs. With learners working in small groups of between 2 and 4 learners, each group should compose a rap song that attempts to challenge the assumptions proposed in the advertising. Refer to the 'challenging assumptions' guidelines before commencing this stage.

To add a little authenticity, you may allow your learners to use musical tracks to work with. The web sites www. soundcloud.com and rappad.co have a large number of instrumental 'rap beats' that could be utilised. There are of course other sources online and your more musical learners may choose to create their own beats.

Videos or audio recordings of the final rap versions will make an excellent class or course record of the activity, with the added value of being used as exemplars for subsequent learner groups.

Extended activities:

The most obvious way to extend this activity, particularly as your learners will have developed some key musical composition skills, is to repeat the activity with the introduction of different media stimuli. News, current affairs and political broadcasts make great substitutions for advertising, as they offer the same opportunities for challenging assumptions, while at the same time engaging your learners with local, regional and/or global issues. This rap activity can work well as a part of a larger project topic, providing an alternative and entertaining mode of expression, based on the required knowledge of the project.

Background information: Challenging assumptions

When faced with a scenario or situation, we should attempt to understand if we are making any assumptions about what is being presented. In challenging assumptions, the act of questioning is very important. We can simply use the 'why?' technique, asking 'why?' a number of times in succession, to understand what assumptions are being made and on what grounds they are based. It is very important to note a key difference between a curious child asking 'why?'. For the child, the question is a genuine attempt to learn something that they don't already know, whereas for the creative thinker, it is about challenging what they already know, with the objective of stimulating some alternative ideas or new questions.

The questioning is deliberately provocative and designed to make people 'think again' about what they already know (or think they know). Challenging assumptions can legitimately any aspect of a statement.

CREATIVE THINKING
IN LITERACY & LANGUAGE SKILLS

School magazine

Thematic topic	Media
Creative thinking method	Associative thinking
Primary skills addressed	Speaking, listening
Secondary skills addressed	Writing
Resources required	None

Overview:

The activity task is to design a concept for a school (or other organisation) magazine. The magazine should promote certain values and attitudes of the organisation, in a way that connects with the intended reading audience. We can imagine, for example, that a school magazine will be read by pupils, possibly by parents and teachers, though all associated with the particular school environment.

While one important part of magazine design is determining a meaningful and appropriate name, the magazine values, content and sections can also benefit from a structured creative thinking approach, which in this case is an approach called 'associative thinking'.

Associative thinking is a key element in a number of creative thinking methods. It is perhaps most significant during formal brainstorming activities and the more-focussed oblique thinking activities. It relies on new ideas being formed in response to emerging stimuli, as the human brain naturally makes familiar associations with new information.

Background information: Magazine concept design

• Decide who the audience for the magazine is. This description should be quite specific, avoiding statements like' anyone who wants to read it'.

• Consider what the magazine is designed to do. This can be expressed in a list format, following discussion and prioritising. Is the magazine to educate, inform, challenge, mock, inspire etc.? Try to avoid a magazine that attempts to be 'all things to all people'. In other words, stay focused.

• Decide what the values of the magazine should be. Is it ethical, empowering, aspirational, supportive, fun, factual etc.?

• Through discussion and editing, determine a content map, specifying clear sections of the magazine and any sections that contain recurring or changing elements.

• Once the value and content of the magazine have been decided, a suitable name can be chosen.

• From this point consider the visual design of the magazine, though for this activity the concept of the magazine is more important

Activity:

The first and most important step is to determine who is the target audience for the magazine. As the teacher you may wish to impose this as a fixed element, or invite suggestions through discussion. Until a target audience is clearly specified and agreed upon, you should refrain from continuing the activity.

From this point, each step of the process can be processed in a similar way, using associative thinking.

To begin with start with the very general, the notion of a magazine. Simply begin by writing the word 'magazine' on a flip chart or white board and ask your learners to tell you what this makes them think of, effectively offer associations. Keep a record of the associations that are offered.

Continue by asking your learners to prioritise which suggested elements or ideas are most important in a magazine, generating a hierarchical list as a result. This subsequent process should be undertaken with specific consideration to your target audience.

Present the word 'function' on your white board and ask your learners to make associations with this word, relating to the current magazine project. What is this magazine being designed to actually Do? What does it offer to its readership? Review the associations suggested and determine what the primary, and perhaps secondary functions, of the magazine are to be.

In order to determine the values of the magazine, simply write the word 'values' on your flip chart or white board, asking your learners to offer associated suggestions, what does this word make them think of? Collect and display their contributions and if other ideas start to grow out of the new suggestions that you receive, encourage learners to develop associations along these pathways.

Once you have exhausted associations with the word 'values', review the output and decide which value or values are most appropriate to the current magazine. You can then specify these as the magazine values.

Repeat this process with the term 'magazine content' to determine both the sections and content within sections.

Finally, write the audience description, magazine function, magazine values and magazine content on the flip chart or white board, asking your learners to suggest suitable names that they can associate with one or all of these previous outputs. Try to engage learners in a democratic process to make a final decision on the magazine name, providing those learners that wish to, an opportunity to present a case for their own or any other suggestion.

Extended activities:

The creative thinking activity is based on the design of a magazine 'concept', which provides fairly immediate opportunities for extended activities.

As content for the magazine has been decided, it is possible to assign tasks to students, whether in groups or as individuals, to create specific content for the magazine. The most obvious form for this type of production is to write articles within the designated sections. Each student or group could be given a different article to work on.

If this is a viable extension activity for your learners, please keep in mind the associated tasks to creating an article, such as research, which could include the interviewing of 'specialist' commentators or contributors. As many magazine articles exist alongside visual elements, your learners could also create imagery or (perhaps better for their literacy or language learning) write a brief for a creative practitioner, such as an illustrator or photographer.

A second approach could be to work more specifically on the visual design of the magazine, considering page layout, typography, colour schemes and cover design. In addition to the magazine design, this element can be extended by thinking about marketing for the magazine, creating posters or other advertisements to engage your learners in further use of targeted language.


CREATIVE THINKING
IN LITERACY & LANGUAGE SKILLS
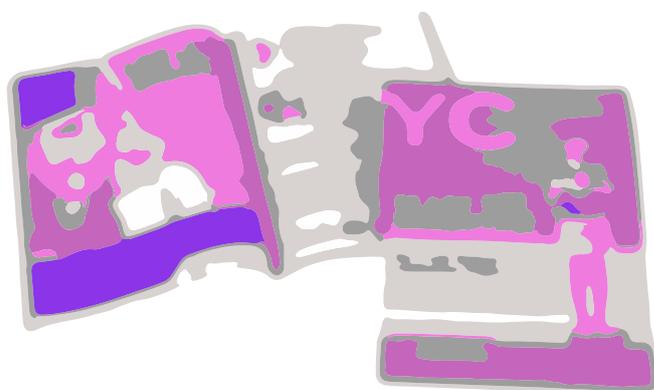
Ambient media

Thematic topic	Media
Creative thinking method	Random input
Primary skills addressed	Speaking, looking
Secondary skills addressed	Writing, listening
Resources required	Local environment images

Overview:

It can be important for learners to engage with their local environment and communities, as such interaction will encourage language use at different levels. Most local communities will have a calendar of events that take place, and most will have products and services offered by local businesses and shops. On a smaller scale, schools and colleges also have calendars of events, as well as products and services on offer. This could include services such as student support, administration and lessons.
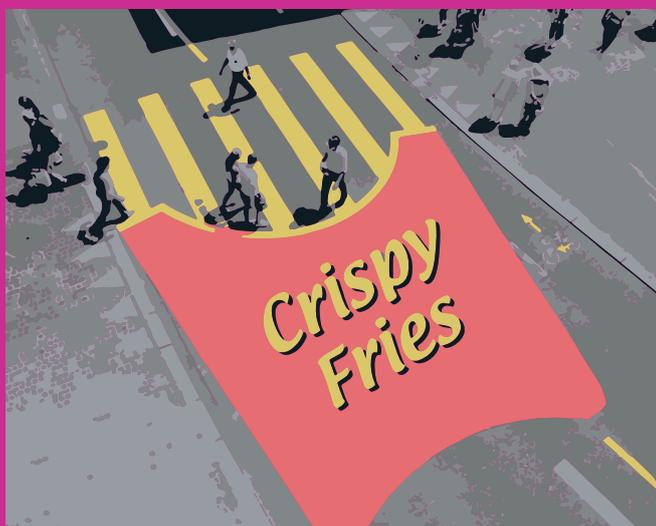
Background information:
Ambient media advertising

'Ambient media' design and production has increased significantly within the broader field of advertising, which is primarily due to the ability for people to record (photograph and video) ambient media advertising and share it with friends and associates. The better and more interesting examples of ambient media have the potential to become viral campaigns, however, it is important to note that is not how ambient media campaigns begin life.

Although ambient media ads can look very different to conventional advertising, the vast majority of examples can be classified as one of two types, 'site specific' and 'interactive'.

To determine if a piece of ambient media advertising is site specific, you can ask the question 'If I moved this advertisement down the street or into the next town, would it still be effective?'. To illustrate this example, we may consider a very famous ambient media example. This was an advertisement for coffee, which consisted of placing images of coffee mugs over the ventilation grills above the New York subway system. What was important here is that the steam rising though the vents made it look like the steam was coming from the coffee. Had the coffee mug images just been placed on a pavement (without steam coming through a vent) the advert would have lost most (if not all) of its value.

To understand interactive ambient media, we can think of a campaign that was designed to raise awareness of physical abuse against children. Glass cigarette ash trays were created with an image printed on the underside. The image was of a child with cigarette burns on her face, with the implication being that these burns were caused deliberately by an adult. When a smoker using the ashtray extinguished their cigarette on the bottom of the glass ashtray, there was a sense that they were inflicting another burn on the child's face. The result was quite powerful, but only at the point that the audience interacted directly with the design.

Activity:

This activity encourages engagement with a community by designing an ambient media campaign to promote an event or a product, service or shop. It will require a selection to be made on the nature of the 'thing' to be advertised. For the purpose of illustration, we will assume that the service to be advertised is a local multi-ethnic food stand, providing a wide range of exotic and unusual dishes for the local market/community.

As the facilitator of the activity you should walk around the local area and take photographs of the local environment, things like a disused land site, a piece of sculpture or architecture, a play park, a tourist attraction, anything that is visible to people passing by. This part of the task could be achieved in many cases by using Google's street view function, as this allows you to capture large numbers of environmental images very quickly. Ideally these images will relate to places where the target audience for the food stand are likely to pass or see. Otherwise, advertising in such locations will not yield any additional business for the food stand.

Ask your learners to work in small teams of between 3 and 5 learners, explaining the brief to them (what is being advertising), along with the information relating to ambient media. You may be able to show images of ambient media examples from the internet, as this would help.

Before you offer the environment images to your learners, you should ask them to think about the thing that is being advertised, and to write down as many things as they can about this thing, including any benefits it offers. In the example of the multi-ethnic food stand, you may include good taste, the cost, colourful displays, health benefits, the large variety, the exotic nature of the food, the idea of travel etc. You can also ask the learners to think about why someone would not want to miss out on this food stand. Also ask learners to list adjectives that they feel would help to 'sell' the idea of the food stand.

Once each group has a list of characteristics associated with the thing to be advertised, distribute your environment photographs at random, ensuring that each group receives at least three images. You could place the images inside an envelope or box and ask members of each group to select three images, without seeing them in advance.

Ask each group to consider their images, and from this information, to generate a number of ambient media advertising concepts that could make use of each space. Solutions should positively promote the food stand (or other thing to be advertised).

While this is challenging, you should demand between 4 and 6 ideas per picture, per group. Each group should discuss their ideas, selecting the best idea for each image, which they will subsequently present to the larger class for feedback / discussion. Encourage your learners to draw on the images to show any details or features.

Allow each group to select their 'best' idea, then continue by allowing them to create some visual design sheets, similar to those a designer would present to a client.

Once a final ambient media design has been arrived at, each group should write a short report that explains why they think their idea is an appropriate solution to the brief, including how they think the design takes advantage of the environmental space that they finally selected. The report should use persuasive language in an attempt to persuade the client that this is the best idea possible.

Extended activities:

The activity can be repeated with different sets of environment images and different things to advertise, however, the learners can be granted greater autonomy by surveying the local environment themselves.

While this is a good opportunity to increase their engagement, the random input method demands that their search is determined by a random element. This could be a postcode, a street name or a specific part of the school or town, imposed by some random (non-selective) process.

CREATIVE THINKING
IN LITERACY & LANGUAGE SKILLS

TV news

Thematic topic	Media
Creative thinking method	Associative thinking
Primary skills addressed	Speaking, writing
Secondary skills addressed	Listening
Resources required	News videos (TV)

Overview:

News programmes on TV can provide us with some very useful in-class resources. In this activity we will use this type of media as a starting point to promote some creative thinking and writing.

The activity will employ the creative thinking technique of 'associative thinking' as the primary method, though it will be supported by the 'random input' technique to provide for a wider range of outcomes.

Both of these techniques rely on the capacity of the human brain to work as a self-maximising system, which effectively means it can very adeptly formulate new connections with disparate concepts, where no obvious connections existed previously. Both techniques will become clear by following the systematic process set out in the activity section below.

Background information: Writing news articles

You can begin the process of writing a news article by adopting the 5 W's method, which essentially poses the following questions:

- Who did what?
- What happened?
- Where did it take place?
- When did it take place?
- Why did it happen?

The supplementary question of 'How did it happen?', may also be included in this initial stage.

Create an outline for your article to ensure that:

- You get to the point of the story as quickly as possible.
- Give all of the important details required to understand the article / story.
- Support your main facts with additional information. Where this is an opinion, include an opposing view.
- Include interviews with witnesses, if this adds to the authenticity of the story.
- Provide a conclusion to the article, which may act as a brief summary.

Activity:

The first task is to choose one or a number of news presentations from TV. In making this selection you should focus on news articles with introductions that require further detail for the meaning to be fully known. You may be able to source examples that have full sentences such as:

'Earlier today large crowds gathered in the seaside town of Blackpool, where a man and his pet dog provided an unexpected performance in front of the famous Blackpool tower. We can go over to reporter Tom Tubbs to find out exactly what the crowds were so excited about. So Tom, what's been happening in Blackpool?'

Alternatively, you may find a news report that can be used by stopping the report at a strategic point, allowing scope for imagined interpretations. This type of resource may work like this:

'We have some breaking news just coming in. Apparently an American town was bought to a standstill when a leading politician….[report deliberately stopped here]'

In each case there is an opportunity for your learners to imagine a scenario that would follow, to be written and then presented in the style of a news item.

However, to add another dimension to the activity, you should create either a list or a set of cards containing adjectives. Before each learner is asked to complete the news item, they should be randomly assigned one of the adjectives from the list or set of cards. This can be achieved by asking learners to select cards without seeing the content, or to select numbers from an unseen numbered list.

For this activity the following adjectives have been suggested, though you may choose to use your own choice of adjectives:

- Happy
- Mysterious
- Surprising
- Tragic
- Unbelievable
- Shocking
- Frightening
- Funny
- Boring
- Uplifting

As a final illustration, each learner will have the beginning of a news story to complete, which should reflect the adjective that they have been assigned.

Set a time limit for each news presentation, which may be as short as 30 seconds or as long as 2 minutes. Clearly the length of time will influence the style of writing and detail offered. Shorter news presentations are not necessarily easier to write, as they require a greater efficiency in reporting the salient information.

While ideas can be discussed amongst learners, the news item should be written before being presented or performed. Before making a final selection for their story, ask each learner to generate at least three alternative ideas, based on the provided parameters.

To add a level of authenticity to the task, the news presentations can be video recorded, using simple props to represent a typical news studio. Each presenter should sit at the presenter's desk and present to camera.

Extended activities:

Once your learners are familiar with the process of writing news article based on this method, ask them to select suitable news presentations for use as an in-class resource. Collect the examples for use with the current group or a subsequent group of learners.

Ask each learner to provide a written overview of their submission, enabling selection without spoiling the function of creating an open-ended narrative starting point. In each case, ask the learner to assign at least 5 adjectives for use with their news presentation submission.

The lesson can be repeated using the learner-submitted resources, with the emphasis being on a TV news presentation or even a newspaper article or other news reporting form.

Guerrilla for the party

Thematic topic	Media
Creative thinking method	**Brainstorming**
Primary skills addressed	**Speaking, listening**
Secondary skills addressed	**Reading, writing**
Resources required	**None**

Overview:

While traditional advertising and promotion can be used to promote a school event, the idea of Guerrilla advertising can add an element of adventure for your learners, as it gives them permission to think (and perhaps act) outside the confines of convention.

In such a situation, the initial excitement can go a little flat if the enthusiasm isn't converted into viable and creative ideas for execution, whether as concepts or in reality. This is where the power of structured brainstorming can play a key part in both motivating learners and generating creative ideas.

Criteria for assessing guerrilla advertising:

•   The proposed solution has a shock factor or element of surprise and will generally be considered to be innovative or creative.

•   The proposed solution is likely be encountered / observed by the specified target audience.

•   The proposed solution could be achieved at a low financial cost, or even at zero cost.

•   The intended response for the advertisement is clear for its audience. For example, if the campaign is to attend an event, all of the information is available and this message is clear.

•   The proposed solution is appropriate to the specified target audience, in terms of content and style / design.

Background information: Guerrilla marketing

The term 'Guerrilla Marketing' was coined by Jay Conrad Levinson in his 1984 book 'Guerrilla advertising'. It is generally considered to be a strategy that focuses on low-cost unconventional marketing strategies, that are designed to result in maximum impact. One of the key tenets of guerrilla advertising is to take the target audience by surprise in some way. Other key characteristics are high energy, imagination, indelible impressions (once seen never forgotten), resulting in social excitement, which with today's connected communities can result in a far-reaching campaign. Some of the techniques to achieve guerrilla advertising are sabotage, ambush and flash mobs, with these and other events often taking place amongst the intended audience.

In recent years there has been some confusion between guerrilla advertising and ambient media advertising, which can be just as creative and shocking. However, the primary difference between the two forms is most often permission. Most ambient media ads will have pre-arranged permissions at sites and with authorities, even if the target audience is unaware of this. Guerilla advertising tends to act without permissions. Guerilla advertising is more about seizing opportunities.

Generally, guerrilla acts are undertaken without conventional permission. While advertisers seek the permission of site owners before locate their media, guerrilla marketers seize opportunities without permission.

Activity:

The activity is designed to generate a large number of ideas to support a guerrilla advertising campaign to promote a local event, which for the purpose of this illustration will be a school event.

Ask your learners to work in groups of between 3 and 5 learners, with the task of generating ideas to support a guerrilla advertising campaign to promote an event within your school / college (or local community). As with all advertising, it is essential that the target audience is identified and that any subsequent campaign will connect with this audience, both mentally and physically.

To achieve this goal, you are advised to follow a formal brainstorming process, which is outlined below.

Brainstorming guidelines:

• Define the problem / question / objective etc. In this example the problem to solve is how to create a guerilla advertising campaign for a specified event (specify the event).

• Set a time limit for the session (or round). five or six minutes should be sufficient, though if it is the first time you have used formal brainstorming with learners, you may wish to increase the time slightly. Try to find a time that allows the quota to be met.

• Decide on a Quota (number target) that you feel you can meet and that will be challenging. A quota of between five and eight ideas would work well for this problem.

• Generate and record ideas until you meet your Quota (or the time runs out) - don't be tempted to judge and reject ideas as they emerge.

• Evaluate ideas at the end of the session or round (using the criteria below), recognising the value of 'initial ideas' that could be developed into viable solutions with a little more focused thought. This is an important stage, as some ideas may sound a little crazy to start with, but they could have hidden potential.

• Repeat the brainstorming process as many times as you feel is necessary to improve the creative quality of the ideas.

Following each round of idea generation, including the final evaluation stage, each group should make a short verbal presentation of their 'best' or most interesting solution, to the members of other groups. The group spokesperson can be rotated over a number of rounds of idea generation, ensuring most or all learners get a chance to take this role.

While this is primarily a speaking and listening exercise, written activities can be introduced if they are better suited to your learning focus. Writing the solution is an obvious application of the result, though other forms of writing such as a design specification, a rationale for rejecting certain ideas, or even a commentary on the thinking process, are all possibilities. Forms of written expression maybe traditional essay style responses, though forms such as news reports, blog posts or even Tweets for Twitter publication, could be included.

Extended activities:

This formal brainstorming process can be used in many different situations where the number of ideas is seen as important to achieving creative solutions, so an extended activity could be to create a different campaign based on the principles of Guerilla advertising.

However, to avoid repetition and to add another dimension to the potential learning on offer, ask your learners to work individually or in pairs to think of something else to advertise through guerilla advertising. Brainstorming could be used to support this initial process. Once a suitable event, product, service, cause etc. has been selected, ask your learners to write an advertising brief for an advertising company.

The advertising brief should include key information such as what is to be advertised, the target audience (clearly defined), what the advertiser wants the audience to do in response to the campaign (the 'call to action'), the budget, any restrictions on location or the timing of the campaign. A clear rationale should be provided for all of the choices that your learners make within this additional task.

CREATIVE THINKING
IN LITERACY & LANGUAGE SKILLS

Radio advert

Thematic topic	Media
Creative thinking method	Oblique thinking
Primary skills addressed	Speaking
Secondary skills addressed	Writing
Resources required	Collection of objects

Overview:

Radio advertising has long been an integral component of mass media broadcasting, and despite the rise of television and other screen-based media, radio advertising remains an attractive marketing channel for many companies. One reason for this continuing appeal is the fact that many people listen to their radios while driving cars, maintaining a large captive audience for any marketing team.

Radio adverts are often short-form narratives, packing a lot of information into a relatively short time, without the added support of visual imagery. Therefore, the writing of effective radio advertising is very much an acquired skill and a challenging test for any literacy or language learner. That said, it does not mean that we should avoid such challenging tasks, as attempting them will help to focus language use on direct and precise communication.

To aid learners in focusing their language use for this task, we can introduce a creative thinking method that will force learners to move beyond effective language to introduce the illusive component of creativity, which is considered a staple in the advertising world.

18

Background information:
Creating radio advertising

As stated above creating effective radio advertisements is perhaps more difficult than many people think, as it requires a fairly skilled use of language to deliver an equally effective concept or idea. As with most creative activities a few key principles can go along way in assisting the novice in producing quality work. Below is a short list of principles that should be adhered to in creating effective and memorable radio advertising:

• Ensure you know and have specified the target audience for the advertisement. This information will determine many decisions later in the process, such as any voice actors, the nature of the message, references to popular culture and interests etc., The more specific you are in defining your target audience, the better.

• Get straight to the point. Make sure the key message is contained within the first few seconds of the advertisement, even if it is repeated throughout the rest of the ad.

• Make sure you have a clear 'call to action'. What is it that you want the audience to do after hearing the ad?

• Ensure the audience understands the benefits of your offer.

• Make sure your message is clear by testing your script or advert with a real audience. LISTEN to their feedback.

• Optional: Many radio ads use rhetorical devices (or tropes). While this adds a layer of complexity to the task, it may assist the learners further in understanding more complex and structured language use.

Activity:

Ask your learners to bring an object to the lesson, or present them with a collection of objects. Things such as CDs, hair brushes, instruments, clothing etc. would work well for this activity. Make a list of the objects and assign each object a number, without sharing this information with your learners.

With your learners working in small groups of between 2 and 4 learners, ask each group to select a number from your list. After selecting a number present the group with the corresponding object. This is the thing that they will be advertising on the radio.

Before setting the task allow your learners to listen to a small number of radio advertisements, allowing them to familiarise themselves with the form. You can also share the information above, relating to the process of creating effective radio advertising.

At this point your learners have a product to advertise and some ideas about creating radio adverts. However, to introduce an unexpected element you will need to assign each group an oblique thinking cue, a statement that should influence the idea for the radio advert.

It is simple to make a physical set of cards with oblique thinking cues on, or you can simply ask learners to select a number from a pre-formatted list of oblique thinking cues.

For this activity you can use the following list of oblique thinking cues or you may wish to create your own:

- The great outdoors
- Everyone wants something precious
- We all love a good story
- Focus on the detail
- Make people happy
- What would life be like without?
- Look through someone else's eyes
- Make it musical
- Concentrate on using familiar language or clichés

- Steal an old idea for a new thing
- Create a mystery
- Include the most unexpected person

Using their assigned oblique thinking cue, each learner group should create a script for a 30 second radio advertisement, promoting the object in a way that is associated with the oblique thinking cue. Music and sound can be specified if that is an important part of the advertising concept. The advertisement should be as close to 30 seconds as possible, without exceeding this time limit.

Discussion should be encouraged during the planning stages and each group should conceive a minimum of 5 possible ideas to choose from before making their final selection. Once the scripts have been created they should either be acted out to the larger group or recorded and played back. The recording can generally be completed using a smart phone recording device or

Extended activities:

This activity can be repeated using the same objects and/or oblique thinking cues or with either of these elements changed. The result is an infinite resource that is sure to prompt real creativity and originality.

However, as an extended activity it may be more beneficial to literacy and language learners to continue working on their original advertisement. In doing so, and to create a new challenge, the radio advertisement should be edited or recreated to create a radio advertisement that contains the same message, but in the much shorter time of 10 seconds. 10 second adverts are not uncommon on radio, though they will demand a more precise and economic use of language.

CREATIVE THINKING
IN LITERACY & LANGUAGE SKILLS

Children's rights

Thematic topic	Media
Creative thinking method	What if?
Primary skills addressed	Speaking, listening
Secondary skills addressed	Writing
Resources required	None

Overview:

Within the development of advertising, the late twentieth century saw a dramatic increase in the conception and use of what we could describe as socially beneficial, or socially aware advertising. This type of advertising often deals with prevailing 'issues' of the day.

Such campaigns have attempted to raise awareness of injustices, promote changes in human behaviour, prevent the spread of disease, request support for charitable causes, even supporting national war efforts, and more. The underlying strategies in such campaigns often rely on relating to certain human 'basic appeals'1, which are psychological triggers that we all possess.

For example, the basic appeal of a 'need to nurture' is often used in charity advertising, when the plight of young and vulnerable children is the cause to be supported. The basic appeal of a 'need to feel safe' may be used to promote awareness and responsible actions relating to health issues, or even to sell insurance.

Professor of Communication Jib Fowles, published a list of 15 basic appeals which is considered sufficient to cover most eventualities in advertising. For example, a campaign based on the 'need for attention', may be used to advertise a provocative or flamboyant garment, as it is considered that the objective of a person buying the garment is to attract attention.

To generate very different and potentially creative advertising concepts, we can use the 15 basic appeals model along with a creative thinking technique called 'what if?'. This technique may sound very simple, but

If used properly it can really challenge preconceived ideas about almost any subject. Essentially you take an existing or new situation and pose the question of 'what if' something was different, how would that affect the outcome?

For example, we may say things such as:

'What if the use of books was banned in teaching?'

'What if we allowed children to run their own schools?'

In each case the question demands one or more responses, perhaps even a lengthy discussion, however in each case the response(s) must conform to the forced change in approach, exploring the potential of alternatives.

While these questions may be interesting, in terms of conceiving creative advertising you will need to pose different 'what if?' questions.

Background information: Creating advertising

When creating effective advertising, there are a number of principles that, if followed, will result in more effective advertising that addresses the right audience.

1. Identify and specify the target audience from the outset. Different audiences have different preferences and cultural references. This includes choosing an appropriate written and visual language. Consider how a poster for a businessman may be different from a poster for a teenage rock fan. Once the audience has been identified, this knowledge MUST inform the subsequent advertisement.

2. Ensure that the thing being advertised is very clear to the audience.

3. Also ensure that what you want your audience to do as a response, is also very clear. If you want them to give money to a charity, tell them. This is often called a 'call to action'.

4. Base your communication on reason and logic, which may involve targeting specific emotions and/or needs of the audience.

5. Communicate benefits that will exist if the person takes your suggested action. A direct or indirect benefit to them (such as feeling noble).

Activity:

In this activity the learners are required to generate a concept for an advertising campaign, which can (if time permits) be formed into a conventional advertising form, such as a poster, a short TV style ad or even a radio ad. If less time is available, the concept could be presented as a t-shirt design / slogan.

There is a charter or rights that exists to protect children and young people in care and living away from their biological families. It stipulates that such children and young people have the right to:

Feel good about yourself

Live in a place where you are safe and cared for

Get help you want or need

Understand and have a say in the decisions that affect you

While the charter may appear simplistic or obvious, it exists because too many vulnerable children and young people in care do not currently have these rights.

For the activity, you should select one of the rights listed above and create a campaign concept that promotes that idea. It is important that you identify and make explicit, the audience that you are aiming the campaign at. Who do you want to support your cause and respond to your advertisement? This could be local councils, charities, schools, parents etc. The idea of 'anybody' as a target audience is not acceptable, as this is too vague and unhelpful.

To begin with, use the target audience of parents, those whose children do not need care, though as parents they may be in a position to help others.

Typically (and predictably), this type of campaign would appeal to the parent's 'need to nurture', to look after those less fortunate and vulnerable than themselves. However, in this case we will try to avoid predictable responses by asking the following questions:

'What if we try to appeal to the need to achieve within our target audience?'

'What if we try to appeal to the need for affiliation within our target audience?'

'What if we try to appeal to the need for guidance within our target audience?'

When conducting the activity start with a discussion of what the particular appeal means, encouraging your learners to volunteer answers verbally. Consider how the 'need' might be satisfied. For example, the need to achieve may be based on someone doing something that makes them feel good about themselves or it could be based on a target or challenge of some kind.

Continue the activity by asking your learners to work in small groups of between 3 and 5 learners, and for each group to consider all three 'needs' before deciding a particular approach or 'brief' for a campaign.

The brief will be to create an advertising concept that promotes one of the four rights within the charter, it is aimed at parents as a target audience, and addresses this audience by attempting to appeal to either the need to achieve, the need for affiliation or the need for guidance, within this particular audience.

Initially, each group should 'pitch' their advertising concept verbally and possibly with visual aids, to the larger group/class. Invite the audience to offer constructive criticism. Once each idea has been reviewed each group can create their piece of advertising.

Extended activities:

An obvious opportunity for extending this activity is to simply change the target audience. If the message is re-focused to communicate with (for example) business people, youth volunteers, children etc. the way to appeal to the three different needs (listed above) within these new audiences, will require different approaches. Also consider changing the 'form' of advertisement.

CREATIVE THINKING IN LITERACY & LANGUAGE SKILLS

Twitter contest

Thematic topic	Media
Creative thinking method	**Challenging assumptions**
Primary skills addressed	**Reading, writing**
Secondary skills addressed	**Speaking, listening**
Resources required	**None**

Overview:

The internet, along with a wide range of social media platforms, has created an open arena for anyone with a connection and a digital device to self publish. In some cases, this is in the form of books, news sites (blogs), films, music, in fact all manner of media forms.

One particular media form, which has only arisen since the widespread use of the internet, is the 'Tweet'. 'Tweet' has become the verb to describe how users share short-form messages through the Twitter platform. At the time of writing it is estimated that there are an average of 500 million tweets per day.

The real attraction of the Twitter platform is its restriction on the number of characters permitted, 140 characters. This has forced tweeters to radically prune their written ideas to this very direct delivery, with some users being far better at it than others.

Despite this short form of writing, it is still possible for authors to mislead or misinform audiences, particular when unchallenged statements are made and accepted without question.

20

Background information: Challenging assumptions

The creative thinking technique 'challenging assumptions' is designed to question what are seemingly innocuous statements to determine if at any point assumptions are being made, sometimes innocently.

If we consider the following statement as an example:

'An experienced teacher is the best person to design the lesson'

Based on an initial reading, the statement is fairly innocuous and would be accepted by many readers to be truthful. However, if we start to consider the implications of the statement we can see that many assumptions have been made. For example, the statement assumes that:

- Experience is an indicator of quality – it may not be

- Someone without teaching experience would not be as good at designing the lesson

- Lesson design is not a democratic process

- A person needs to design the lesson – it could be automated

- A lesson has to be designed – ruling out spontaneous lessons happening

- A teacher should design the lesson – when a professional in a given subject may actually be more qualified to do so

In this case each challenged assumption leads to an opportunity to consider what else could be done to enable a lesson, other than what is stated in the initial sentence. In this, it provides stimulus for further investigation, with the potential to create new paradigms for providing lessons.

Activity:

Ask your learners how many of them have Twitter accounts. If you discover that some learners do not have Twitter accounts, you may suggest that they create an account OR work closely with someone who does have a Twitter account.

Then ask your learners to look through some of the Twitter accounts that they follow, from celebrities to friends. Ask them to look for tweets that contain statements, and where they find these type of tweets, to make a copy. The statement may be part of a longer tweet. Ideally each learner should collect around 5 statement-based tweets.

Collect the statement-based tweets from your learners and through a randomizing process, redistribute them to other learners in the class.

The task for each learner is to interrogate the statements that they now possess to determine where assumptions have been made by the author.

Any assumptions discovered are noted by the learner for subsequent discussion as part of a group exercise.

The final task for the student relating to each challenged tweet, is to rewrite the tweet (no more than 140 characters) in a way that is more factually accurate or explicit.

The learners are then invited to retweet their version of the tweet, though this is an optional stage.

Extended activities:

To take advantage of this very short form of writing, additional Twitter-style tasks can be set for learners, to be tweeted or to be recorded simply as writing exercises. Here a few Twitter ideas to think about and perhaps employ with your own learners:

Micro-fiction – creating very short stories within the 140 character limit. Provide a title or theme and then set this challenge

News report – provide each learner with a recent news story and ask them to distil it down to a Twitter post
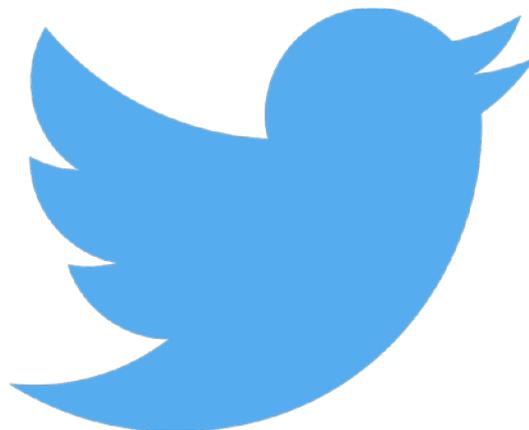
TV or Film review – Ask your learners to post a review of a TV show / series or film they have recently watched, as a Tweet

Hidden story – Describe a well-known story in 140 characters, without revealing any character or place names, see if others can guess the story you are describing
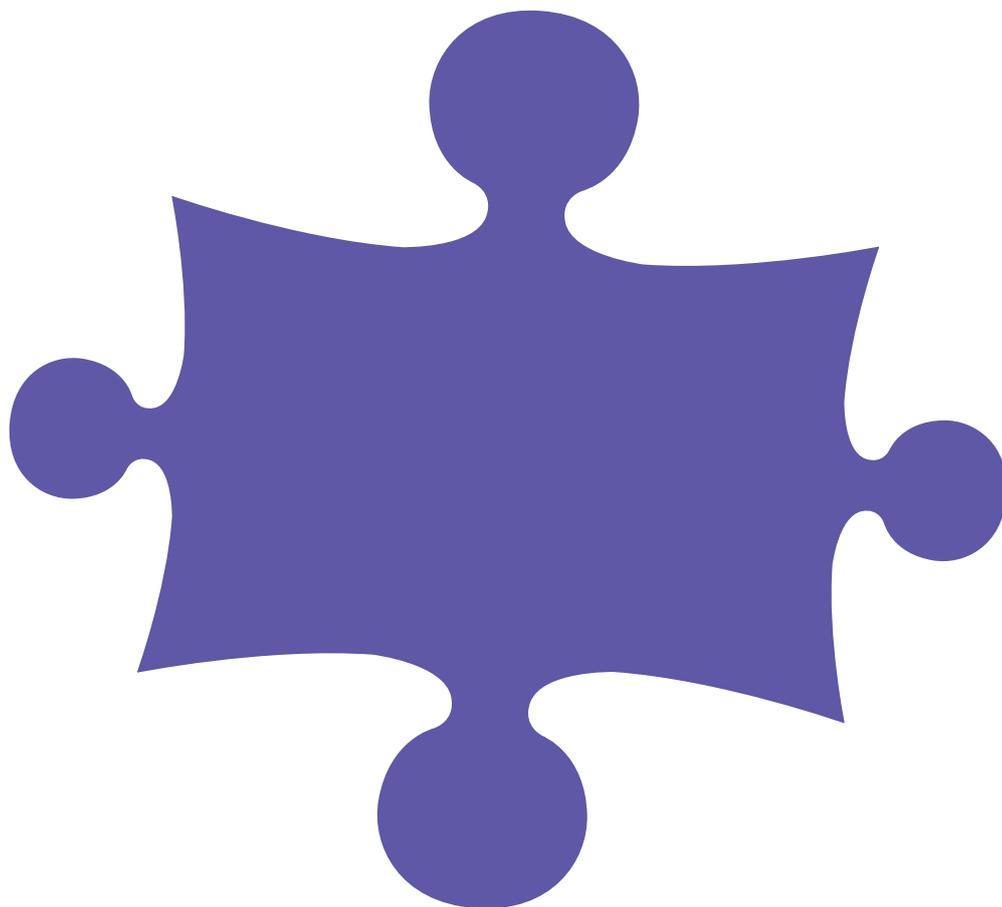
Twitter ad – provide a product or service and ask your learners to advertise it through a Tweet

Twitter titter – within a given theme, ask your learners to write and tweet a joke

All of the above activities demand a very concise and precise use of language and are suited for both literacy and language learners. This said, the short form is often perceived as less threatening in terms of workload.

CREATIVE THINKING
IN LITERACY & LANGUAGE SKILLS